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ENGLISH LITERATURE.

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A MANUAL

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE,

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL.

WITH AN APPENDIX ON ENGLISH METRES.

BY

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PREFACE.

The substance of the following work was delivered in the form of lectures to students, and it is for the use of students that it is principally intended. At the same time I trust that it may prove not uninteresting to the general reader. While conceding the praise which is justly their due to existing compilations — to the works of Craik and Spalding, and the epitome published by Chambers, — one may say without offence that the point of view taken in them lies too far north, and that Scottish authors receive a little more than relative justice from these Scottish critics. To profound research the present work makes no pretension: in this respect I cheerfully acknowledge the immeasurable superiority of the really learned work of Professor Craik; but if I have succeeded in presenting an intelligible and connected view of at least the more popular portion of our literature, as it appears to an ordinary Englishman who has paid attention to the subject, my book will, I think, fill a vacant niche, and my endeavours will not be without a certain value, whether at home or in foreign countries.

Desiring, if possible, that the work should be widely useful as an educational manual, I have thought it a duty to adapt it for general circulation, by avoiding, as far as

was practicable, debatable topics, and carefully respecting religious susceptibilities.

The arrangement of the subject-matter according to two distinct principles — that of the order of time and that of the order of thought — is a novel one: whether it be also sound, let the critics decide. I will only say that in my lectures I have followed this plan, and that it has appeared to be successful, and to engage the attention of the hearers better than an unbroken adherence either to the historical or the critical mode of treatment.

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HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

SECTION I.

ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD.

Anglo-Saxon Literature forms of itself a special department of study. It is one of those stop-gap products of the human mind, working with scanty materials, imperfect tools, and under adverse circumstances, which, like stars scattered over a dark portion of the sky, stud the dreary period that intervenes between the break-up of the ancient civilisation and literature, and the rise of those of modern times. It is a thing apart, like the Irish or the Icelandic literature, and requires to be studied in connection with the fossil remains of other extinct cognate languages, such as the Old Saxon, the Mœsogothic, and the Frisian. It is a chapter in Palæontology. Yet, since the present English tongue is in its essential elements derived from the Anglo-Saxon, and since the existence of an Anglo-Saxon literature probably stimulated our earliest English writers to persist in the use of the vernacular, when interest, fashion, and the torrent of literary example would have led them to adopt the Norman French,

it seems desirable to commence with a brief sketch of that literature.

We know of no Anglo-Saxon composition, produced in England, that can be traced back with certainty to the times of Paganism. We must not look to the dwellers on the muddy Elbe, or the inhabitants of the grassy plains of Holstein, for the teeming imagination which characterised the Northmen of Iceland and Scandinavia, and which, ages before the stirring stimulus of Christianity was applied to them, produced the wonderful mythology of the Edda. In 596, St. Augustine, sent by Gregory the Great, brought the faith to the Anglo-Saxon tribes; and the moral ferment which the introduction of this new spiritual element occasioned, acting upon a towardly and capable race, full of dormant power and energy of every kind, induced also such intellectual exertion as the times permitted, and as the partial communication by the missionaries of the literature of the ancient world tended to enkindle and to sustain. From this period until the Norman Conquest, (and in one memorable instance beyond it), the Anglo-Saxon mind was ever labouring, so far as intestine war and Danish inroad would allow, and executed a very creditable amount of work. Its chief successes, it is true, were obtained through the medium of the Latin, then and long after the common language of Europe, and which a generous and expansive mind, sick of irrational local usages, and material isolation, would rejoice to employ.

The Venerable Bede (673-735), in whom the Saxon intellect culminated, wrote all his extant works in Latin. Alcuin, Eddi Stephanus, and Ethelwerd, did the same. But the rough vernacular was employed in popular poetry, and in all such prose writings, as had a didactic purpose which included the laity within its scope. Such writings were naturally for the most part translations, since it was evidently safer and wiser to gain an insight into, and acquaintance with, the wisdom of antiquity, before essay-

ing, under less favourable conditions, to make conquests in the realm of original thought.

I. Poetry. By far the longest, and in some respects the most interesting, relic of Anglo-Saxon poetry, is the epic poem of *Beowulf*, in forty-three Cantos, first published at Copenhagen, in 1815, by Thorkelin, the keeper of the royal archives, and reproduced in this country in 1833, an English translation being added in 1837, by the eminent Saxon scholar, John Mitchell Kemble. The poem was probably composed in Anglen, a district of Sleswick, before the great Angle migration to Britain in the middle of the fifth century (since it nowhere contains the slightest allusion to Britain), and was brought over, according to a conjecture of Mr. Kemble's, about the year 495, by those who accompanied Cerdic and Cynewine. The poem is Angle, and the chief heroes mentioned in it are Angles; and yet the word "Angle" does not occur through the whole poem. The race to which that local designation was finally fixed are described in *Beowulf* as "Geatas," a name probably derived from that of some god or demi-god; just as the general name of "Hellenes" is nowhere met with in Homer, and as the Romans in early times called themselves Quirites.

Two other pieces of what Mr. Kemble calls the "Angle Cyclus," are, the *Traveller's Song*, and the *Battle of Finnes-burh*. Both these, like *Beowulf*, refer to the times of heathenism and to continental transactions. It is not known by whom they were written. The first known Anglo-Saxon poet is Caedmon, the Northumbrian, who flourished about the year 680, when Christianity was already the faith of all the seven kingdoms. He was at first a lay-brother, afterwards a monk, of St. Hilda's monastery at Whitby. "He sang," says Bede, "the creation of the world, the origin of man, and all the history of Genesis; and made many verses on the departure of Israel out of Egypt, and their entering into the

land of promise, with many other histories from holy writ; the incarnation, passion, resurrection, of Our Lord, and His ascension into Heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the preaching of the Apostles; also the terror of future judgment, the horror of the pains of hell, and the delights of heaven; besides many more about the divine benefits and judgments, by which he endeavoured to turn away all men from the love of vice, and excite in them the love of, and application to, good actions; for he was a very religious man."

II. The extant prose writings, though numerous, are, with one exception, valuable, not so much for any literary merits as for the light which they throw on the labours of the historian and the antiquary. There exists in the public Record offices an immense body of documents — charters, conveyances, declarations, laws, edicts, &c. —many of which have been arranged and translated by the labours of Thorpe and Kemble, and have greatly contributed to deepen our knowledge of the way of life of our forefathers. But such documents are of course not literature, and therefore need not be here considered. Another large portion of the extant works consists of translations, many of which proceed from the pen of Alfred himself, who has explained his own motives for undertaking the work. The views of an "Educational Reformer" in the ninth century are worthy of our careful attention. His object is, he says, "the translation of useful books into the language which we all understand; so that all the youth of England, but more especially those who are of gentle kind and at ease in their circumstances, may be grounded in letters,—for they cannot profit in any pursuit until they are well able to read English." With these views Alfred translated the work of Pope Gregory, *De Curâ Pastorali*, the epitome of universal history by Orosius, the work of Boethius *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, and the Ecclesiastical History of Bede.

But by far the most important prose work that has come down to us is the *Saxon Chronicle*, which gives a connected history of Britain in the form of annals, from the Christian era to the year 1154. The oldest MS. in existence dates from about the year 891, and is thought, with much probability, to have been partly composed, partly transcribed from earlier annals, by or under the direction of Archbishop Plegmund. From this time the Chronicle seems to have been continued under succeeding Archbishops of Canterbury to the time of the Conquest, when the task was transferred, under what circumstances we do not know, to the monks of Peterborough.

Considered as a whole, the literature of the Anglo-Saxons conveys the impression that they were a prosaic and practical race, solid but slow thinkers, without much imagination or mental fire. What they might have made of it, had they been allowed to develop their literature uninterruptedly, it is, of course, impossible to say. But it seems reasonable to suppose that, for ulterior ends of higher good, it was ordered that the Saxon commonwealth should not repose in unmolested prosperity. A vein of sluggishness, of Bœotian enjoyment, of coarse indulgence, with forgetfulness of the higher aims of life, ran through the Saxon character. Their transference from the sandy barrens and marshes of Holstein, from the peaty plains and stunted forests of Hanover, to the rich soil and milder climate of England, tended to develop this weak side—this proneness to ease. In their old dwelling-place they were at least stimulated by the necessity of contending with the unfruitfulness of nature and the encroachments of the sea; in comparison with it, England must have been a terrestrial paradise—a very land of Cockaigne. This tendency to relapse into habits of indolent ease, which Sir Walter Scott has pourtrayed in the character of Athelstan in *Ivanhoe*, extended to the learned class, and to the churchmen no less than the

laity. The influence of such a man as Bede should have been enough to inaugurate a long era of literary energy; yet William of Malmesbury assures us that, with the exception of the brief Saxon annals and the barbarous epitome of Ethelwerd, he had not been able to discover any historical work composed by an Anglo-Saxon upon the affairs of Britain, from the death of Bede to his own time. To form the future English character, it was necessary that the harder and sterner elements which belonged to the Scandinavian races, should be mingled and gradually fused with the softer Teutonic type. The Danish invasions and immigrations, which commenced in 832, and terminated with the establishment of the Danish dynasty in 1017, effected this. But in the process, the existing literary culture, and nearly all the establishments which had been founded to promote it, were swept away. In a country reduced to the dismal condition described by Bishop Lupus in a sermon preached to his flock * about the year 1012, it was impossible that men's thoughts should be efficaciously turned to any subjects save such as bore upon their personal security. Canute, indeed, after he had restored internal peace and order, showed a desire to patronise literary men, and, by rebuilding the monasteries, to open asylums for learning. But the glory and greatness of his reign gave an impulse rather to the Scandinavian than to the Saxon genius. No English poet sang of his victories; that task was left to the *scalds*, whom he brought with him from Denmark. By this time large advances had been made towards the amalgamation of the races. Writing of the year 1036, Malmesbury † says that the citizens of London, "from long intercourse with these barbarians" (the Danes), "had almost entirely adopted their customs." The Danes adopted with facility

* Turner, *Ang.-Sax.* Book vi. ch. xiv.

† Malmesbury, p. 205 (Bohn's series).

the Anglo-Saxon tongue, though importing into it many Danish words, and probably breaking down to a great degree its grammatical structure. The secular laws of Canute, addressed to both races equally, are written in Anglo-Saxon. All that the cold North could supply, the English nationality had now received. The stubborn hardihood and perseverance which were illustrated in the Drakes, the Cooks, the Stephensons, of later days, were, by this large infusion of Danish blood, rooted in the English nature. The intellectual activity and literary culture of the South, together with the great Roman tradition of political order and vigorous administration, were still wanting; and these were supplied by means of the Norman Conquest.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

SECTION II.

THE NORMAN PERIOD.

1066—1350.

In the age at which we are arrived, two classes of men only cultivated literature, the clergy and the minstrels. The local centres at which learning was to be obtained were of two kinds, the universities and the monasteries. Poetry and light literature were comparatively independent of such aids; yet the form and development even of these could not but be largely dependent on the social and moral condition of the classes among whom they were circulated. The intellectual achievements, therefore, of the clergy,—both Saxon and Norman—the means of self-culture which they had at their disposal, and the degree of success with which they availed themselves of those means,—the different classes of poets, their nationality, the traditional or other materials upon which they worked, and the furtherance or obstruction which they met with in the temper and habits of the time,—all these matters must now be successively touched upon. What we have named the Norman period embraces more than two centuries and a half, and includes the long conflict between two opposing elements, which terminated, on the whole, in favour of what was English, yet so that the national language, literature, and prevailing opinions, were all deeply coloured by French words and French thoughts.

For many years after the Conquest the Saxon clergy

were in no mood or condition to betake themselves to the tranquil pursuits of learning. Before that catastrophe, religious fervour and rigour of discipline had long been on the wane amongst them. We read of much laxity of manners, of bishops holding two or more sees at once, of priests so ignorant of Latin as to be unable to say mass without innumerable blunders. The Conqueror, who, with all his cruelty and pride, hated hypocrisy and empty profession with all his heart, would not tolerate these relaxed ecclesiastics, and by the nomination of Lanfranc (a native of Italy, but for many years prior of Bec, in Normandy) to the see of Canterbury, inaugurated a great reformation in Church matters. Some few of the Saxon bishops, as the noble St. Wulstan of Worcester, Agelric of Chichester, and one or two others, were left in possession of their sees; the rest had to make way for Normans. Nor was this all. Had the unworthy only been deposed, and the worthy still allowed to look forward to advancement to be obtained through desert, the Saxon clergy might still have held together, and with renewed strictness of life a revival of learning might have taken place among them. But the repeated insurrections of the English exasperated the fiery temper of the Conqueror; and after having quelled them, and thus "overturned the power of the laity, he made an ordinance that no monk or clergyman of that nation should be suffered to aspire to any dignity whatever." * Thus cut off from the hope of due recognition for merit the Saxon clergy were deprived of one of the chief incentives to study. One may be sure that from that time the more ambitious among them would make haste to learn French, and would rather disguise their nationality than avow it. Yet there was at least one monastery, in which a literary work, begun in happier times two centuries before, was carried on by Saxon

* Malmesbury, p. 287.

monks and in the Saxon tongue. This is the *Saxon Chronicle*, the later portion of which was composed in the monastery of Peterborough. It ends abruptly in the first year of the reign of Henry II. (1154), the writer or writers being by that time probably unable to resist any longer the universal fashion of employing Latin for any serious prose work. William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Caradoc, all these, and many others, were writing history at this very time, and all, as a matter of course, wrote in Latin. The Anglo-Saxon, too, being no longer taught in schools, nor spoken in the higher circles of society, had lost very much of its original harmony and precision of structure; and when the annalist found himself using one inflexion for another, or dropping inflexions altogether, he may well have thought it high time to exchange a tongue which seemed crumbling and disintegrating under his hands, for one whose forms were fixed and its grammar rational. Little did the down-hearted monk anticipate the future glories, which, after a crisis of transformation and fusion, would surround his rude ancestral tongue.

Yet literature and learning were not negligently or even unsuccessfully prosecuted in England during this which we call the Norman period; and this is a fact which we must learn to see in its true light, in order to understand aright the rise of English literature in the fourteenth century. Again, the intellectual awakening which spread to England in the eleventh and twelfth, and produced valuable literary results there in the thirteenth century, cannot be understood except in connection with the general European movement of mind which ensued upon the consolidation of society following the long troubled night of the dark ages. Something must therefore be said about the origin of that movement, about the course it took, and about the great thinkers whose names are for ever associated with it.

Strange as it may seem, the revival of intellectual

activity at the end of the eleventh and in the twelfth century is clearly traceable to the labours and the example of Mahometans. Charlemagne, indeed, had made a noble effort in the ninth century to systematize education, and to make literature and science the permanent denizens of his empire, but the wars and confusion of every kind which ensued upon the partition of that empire among his sons extinguished the still feeble light. A happier lot had befallen the powerful and populous kingdoms founded by the successors of Mahomet. Indoctrinated with a knowledge of the wonderful fertility and energy of the Greek mind, as exemplified especially in Aristotle and Plato, by Syrian Nestorians (whose forefathers, fleeing from persecution into Persia after the council of Chalcedon, carried with them Syriac versions of the chief works of the Greek philosophers, and founded a school at Gondisapor), Haroun-al-Raschid (whose reign was contemporary with that of Charlemagne), and Al Mamoun, his successor, saw and assisted in the commencement of a brilliant period of literary activity in the nations of Arabian race, which lasted from the ninth to the fourteenth century. Among the Arabian kingdoms none entered into this movement with more earnestness and success than the Moorish kingdoms in Spain.* We hear of the Universities of Cordova, Seville, and Granada; and the immense number of Arabic manuscripts on almost every subject contained at this day in the library of the Escurial at Madrid attests the eagerness with which the Moorish writers sought after knowledge, and the universality of their literary tastes. Of their poetry, and the effect which it had on that of Christian Europe, we shall speak presently. Their proficiency in science is evidenced by the remarkable facts which William of Malmesbury relates of Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II. After having put on the monastic habit at

* Sismondi's *Literature of the South of Europe.*

Flory, in France, his thirst for knowledge led him to quit his cloister and betake himself to the Moorish community in Spain, about the year 1000. At Seville, we are told, he "satisfied his desires," becoming an adept, not only in astrology and magic, but also in the "lawful sciences" of music and astronomy, arithmetic and geometry. "These," says Malmesbury, "with great perseverance he revived in Gaul, where they had for a long time been wholly obsolete." Allowing for some exaggeration in this statement, since the studies of the Trivium and Quadrivium, among which the said lawful sciences were included, had never been wholly discontinued in the West since the fall of the Roman empire, we may yet easily conceive that Gerbert was the first who popularized in Gaul the use of the Arabic numerals, without which arithmetic could never have made any considerable progress; and that by importing the astronomical instruments used by the Moors, together with a knowledge of the mechanical principles on which they were constructed, he may have placed the study of astronomy on a new footing. He became a public professor on his return into Gaul, and had many eminent persons among his scholars.

Our next forward step transports us to the monastery of Bec, in Normandy. There the abbots Herluin, Lanfranc, and St. Anselm, formed a line of great teachers, whose lectures were eagerly attended, both by laymen and ecclesiastics. Whether the intellectual life of Bec was directly influenced by the writings of the great Arabian thinkers, it is difficult to ascertain. Avicenna, the physician and philosopher, died in 1037; therefore, in point of time, his comments on the various works of Aristotle might have become known to Lanfranc and Anselm. The Organon, however, which was translated by Boethius and was known to Bede and Alcuin, had never ceased to be used in the schools, and the writings of St. Anselm do not, we believe, contain any proof that he

was acquainted with any other of the works of the Stagyrite besides the Aristotelian logic. Still, it is not only possible but probable, that the reports, brought by Gerbert and others, of the palmy state of literature among the Moors, and of the zeal both of teachers and students in their universities, may have indirectly had a stimulating effect on the studies of Bec.

St. Anselm, abbot of Bec after Lanfranc had been called into England, is considered by many the founder of the scholastic philosophy. At any rate, he seems to have been the first to apply, on a large scale, philosophy and its formulæ to the doctrines of religion. Yet, as he did not originate a method and his writings do not form a systematic whole, it would seem that he cannot fairly be called the founder of scholasticism. What the true scholastic method was, and by whom originated, we shall presently see. St. Anselm merely handles, with great subtlety and dialectical skill, certain special subjects, such as the divine essence, the Trinity, original sin, &c., but does not treat of theology as one connected whole. For these doctrines he endeavours to find irrefragable intellectual proof, and to show that they must be as necessarily accepted on grounds of reason as on grounds of faith. Thus he defines his Proslogium, a treatise on the existence of God, to be "faith seeking understanding" (fides quærens intellectum), and says that he has framed the work "under the character of one endeavouring to lift up his mind to the contemplation of the Deity, *and seeking to understand what he believes.*" Yet we may be certain that St. Anselm himself, like all the saints, derived the certainty of his religious convictions through the will rather than through the reason; he believed and loved, therefore he knew. He, and those who were like-minded to him, could safely philosophize upon the doctrines of faith, because they already possessed, and firmly grasped, the conclusions to which their argumentation was to lead.

But what if a thinker were to arise, who should follow the same path without the same preservative? What if a being of brilliant genius, of captivating eloquence, of immense ambition, should undertake to philosophize upon religion, without the safeguard of personal sanctity?

Such a being was the famous Abelard. This is not the place to enlarge upon his story, which in every subsequent age has attracted the regards alike of the poet and the philosopher.* Suffice it to say that he developed a great scheme, of what we should now call Rationalism, through taking up St. Anselm's argumentative way of proving religious doctrine, without his spirit of humility and submission to authority. He made faith and reason identical, (charitas Dei per fidem *sive rationis donum* infusa), and his scholars demanded from him, he informs us,—evidently placing his own sentiments in their mouths,—not words but ideas, not bare dogmatic statements, but clear enunciations of their philosophical import. His lectures, at Paris, Melun, and Troyes, were attended by enthusiastic multitudes. Roused from its long intellectual slumber, the Western world, like a man whose limbs have been numbed by long inaction, delighted in the vigorous exercise of its mental powers for the mere exercise's sake; or else was eager to try their edge upon whatever subject came in their way. Hence, on the one hand, the endless logical combats, the twistings and turnings of the syllogism in every shape, the invention of innumerable sophisms and solutions of sophisms; on the other hand, that undue extension of rational methods to objects of faith which we have ascribed to Abelard. The danger was great; already Abelard's definitions and explanations trembled on the verge of heresy, if they did not go beyond it; but the ground tone of his philosophy was still more pregnant with mischief than any particular expressions.

* It has been handled by Bayle, Cousin, Pope, Cawthorn, &c.

At this crisis St. Bernard appeared to check the growing evil. He turned back the stream of philosophy, or rather he forced it back within its own limits, and forbade it to encroach upon a domain which did not belong to it. In answering Abelard, he denied that Faith and Reason were identical, or that the doctrines of faith could be discovered and proved independently by any argumentative process. The objects of faith, he said, are given to us from above; they are revealed by God exactly because it is impossible that they should be discovered by man. "Quid magis contra rationem, quam ratione rationem conari transcendere?" A conference between the two, to be held at Soissons, was agreed to; but when the time came for vindicating his philosophy, Abelard's heart failed him, and he appealed to the Pope. He was leniently treated; his own conscience seems to have told him that he had wandered into a wrong path; and he died a penitent in the monastery of Cluny (1142).

We must not suppose, however, that St. Bernard's influence as a thinker was mainly of a negative sort. On the contrary, this last, and not least eloquent, of the Fathers, scarcely ever employed his penetrating and versatile genius except for some end of practical edification. Whether he addresses his own monks at Clairvaux, or writes to Pope Eugenius, or kindles the crusading zeal of nations, or counsels the Knights of the Temple, or composes Latin hymns, the evident aim of his labours is always to enlighten, animate, and do good to his neighbour. His Latin is admirable; far superior to that of St. Anselm; and the charm of genius unites with the halo of saintliness in giving fascination to his eloquent pages.

Scholasticism, then, made what we may call a false start in the school of Bec; its true commencement dates a little later, and from Paris. Peter Lombard, the Master of the Sentences, hit upon the right method of presenting theology under philosophical forms. The *data* of religion

—the substance of revealed truth—he took from tradition; and reserved to philosophy the subordinate office of presenting it in a connected form, of deducing inferences, solving difficulties, and harmonising apparent discrepancies. The *Book of Sentences*, which appeared in 1151, is a complete body of theology in four books. It commences with God—His being and attributes;—then treats of the Creation, first of angels, then of man; of the Fall, and of original and actual sin. In the third book it treats of the remedy of the Fall, the Incarnation; of the theological virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the fourth, of the sacraments, purgatory, the resurrection, the last judgment, and the state of the blessed. All these doctrines are given in the form of "sentences," extracted from the writings of the Fathers. The sentences are interspersed with numerous "quæstiones," in which the author proposes and attempts to solve any difficulties that may arise. The conveniences of this plan are manifest, and it was at once adopted. Alexander Hales, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas, in the thirteenth century, —Duns Scotus, and William of Occam in the fourteenth, —whatever may be their differences, agree in treating theology as a whole, in seeking its *data* from authority, not from speculation, and in confining themselves to the discussion of special questions. Extraneous impulses were not wanting. The metaphysical and ethical works of Aristotle became known in the West about this period, chiefly through the commentaries of the celebrated Spanish Arab Averrhoes (1120-1198), and powerfully stimulated the speculative genius of the schoolmen. But the admiration of the Greek philosopher degenerated into an extravagance, and his authority was at last considered *infallible* in the schools. It was as if the age, in its horror of losing its way, would have a sheet anchor for the mind as well as for the soul, and chain the progressive intellect of man to the Aristotelian philosophy, because the unchanging

interests of the soul demanded fixity and certainty in the eternal Gospel. So it ever is that a true and valuable principle, once found, is sure to be strained in the application.

The scholastic method, having thus taken its rise in Paris, soon spread to England, and was prosecuted there with equal ardour. Some of the greatest of the schoolmen were British-born, although they reaped their highest honours, and spent most part of their lives, abroad. Alexander Hales, the Irrefragable, the master of St. Bonaventure, was the author of the first important commentary on the work of Peter Lombard, and died at Paris, in 1245. Duns Scotus, the Subtle doctor, whose birthplace, and even the date of whose death, are not certainly known, but who was, at any rate, a native of the British Isles, after lecturing at Paris with extraordinary success, is said to have died at Bologna, in 1308. William of Occam, styled the Invincible, passed the greater part of his manhood at the court of the Emperor in Germany, and died there in the year 1347. In the great struggle then proceeding between imperial and papal claims, Occam sided with the Emperors. He was also in his day the head of the school of the Nominalists, a section of the schoolmen which maintained that our abstract ideas had no realities corresponding to them in external existence, but merely corresponded in thought to universal terms in language, that is to generalized expressions, arrived at by the abstraction of differences.

Historians and Chroniclers.

The great intellectual movement which we have been describing expended its force chiefly on questions of theology and philosophy; but it also caused other subjects to be treated more intelligently and studied more earnestly.

A great number of historians and chroniclers flourished in England during this period. All of these were ecclesiastics, most of them monks; and all wrote in the Latin language. With the exception of Marianus Scotus and Ordericus Vitalis (the latter of whom, though born in England, was of French extraction), they all confined themselves to recording the succession of events in their own country. There is no occasion to seek out motives and particular inducements impelling the learned of any country to historical composition. All men are eager to know the past; to hear about the deeds of their forefathers; to take their bearings, as it were, from the elevation to which history raises them, and from a survey of the road along which their nation, or race, or class, have come, deduce more trustworthy conclusions as to the unknown future which lies before them. If, however, in regard to the principal writers, any special reasons must be given, it might be mentioned that William of Malmesbury, the best of them all, with his contemporary, Henry of Huntingdon, took as their literary model the Venerable Bede, the father of modern history in the West;—that Geoffrey Vinesauf records with natural complacency the chivalrous adventures of King Richard, in whose train he visited Palestine at the time of the third Crusade; and that Geoffrey of Monmouth and Caradoc, when clothing in a grave historic dress the floating fictions which had come down the stream of their popular poetry, may have thought to indemnify their Welsh countrymen for recent defeat and present inferiority, by telling them of the imaginary victories of Arthur over Saxon hosts.

It may be worth while to collect a few facts concerning the best historians in each century of our period. For the twelfth century, we will take William of Malmesbury and Geoffrey of Monmouth; for the thirteenth, Geoffrey Vinesauf, Roger of Wendover, and Matthew Paris; for the fourteenth, Nicholas Trivet and Ranulph Higden.

1. William of Malmesbury, a monk in the famous monastery of that name, founded by the Irish St. Maidulf in the seventh century, dedicated his *Historia Regum Anglicæ* to Robert, Earl of Gloucester, a natural son of Henry I., and the chief patron of literature in those times. He congratulates himself on being "the first who, since Bede, has arranged a continuous history of the English." Being, as he tells us, of Norman descent by one parent, and of Saxon by the other, he writes of the actions of both impartially. Certain modern historians have, perhaps, made too much of the alienation caused between Saxon and Norman by the difference of race. The English knew that William of Normandy professed to have as good a title to the crown as Harold; it was chiefly the unjust laws, not the persons, of him and his sons, to which they had a rooted objection; and it was as the "tyrants of their fields," not as Normans, that they detested his followers. Malmesbury himself, though half Norman, evidently regards himself as a thorough Englishman; the history of England, from the landing of Hengist and Horsa, is his history. Archbishop Lanfranc has a special devotion to Dunstan, a Saxon saint; and even the Saxon chronicler can freely praise the Norman abbot of Peterborough, if he is a man of worth and stands up for the rights of the monastery. Malmesbury's history comes down to the year 1142;—he is supposed to have died soon afterwards.

2. Geoffrey of Monmouth, author of the famous *Historia Britonum*, was a Welshman, as his name implies, and was raised in 1152 to the bishopric of St. Asaph. He also dedicated his history to Robert, Earl of Gloucester. It professes to be a translation of "a very ancient book in the British tongue," brought out of Brittany by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, in which the actions of all the kings of Britain were related, from the Trojan Brutus "down to Cadwallader, the son of Cadwallo." Nothing further is known of this "very ancient book," and not a

single page of the history will stand the test of criticism. What amount of truth may be mixed up with the mass of falsehood it is impossible now to determine. But the book must ever possess an abiding literary interest, because, like the pretended history of Charlemagne by Archbishop Turpin, it furnished a rich mine of materials to the cycle of romance writers, of whom we shall have to speak presently. It is to Geoffrey's ardent Welsh nationality, and disregard of historic precision, that we owe the undying story of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

3. Geoffrey Vinesauf, who, as we have said, accompanied King Richard to the Crusade, died early in the thirteenth century. We shall have to notice him again as a verse-maker.

4. Roger of Wendover, a monk of St. Albans, Prior of Belvoir at the time of his death, in 1237, left behind him a chronicle entitled *Flores Historiarum*, which is considered to be divided into three parts. The first, extending from the Creation to the year A.D. 447, is entirely copied from older authors, and is of no value. The second part, which reaches to about the year 1200, is in the main copied from other chronicles, but is valuable inasmuch as it preserves to us many extracts from lost works. The third part, recording the history of Roger's own times, is exceedingly valuable as an original authority.

5. Matthew Paris, also a monk of St. Albans, wrote, under the title of *Historia Major*, a history of England, commencing with the Norman Conquest, and coming down to 1259, the year in which he died. It is a work which has always been considered as of great authority, though Dr. Lingard has shown that the extreme *Anglicanism* of the writer has led him into many misstatements.

6, 7. Nicholas Trivet, a Dominican, and Ranulph Higden, a monk of St. Werburgh's, in Chester, composed, the one a valuable and well-written series of Annals, extending from 1135 to 1307, the other, a work, entitled *Polychro-*

nicon, which comes down to 1357, the English translation of which, by Trevisa, was a popular book in the fifteenth century.

Law and Medicine.

Early in our period the study of laws and jurisprudence was revived, and carried on with the eagerness and exclusiveness which are incidental to revivals. Up to the twelfth century the Roman law had been known either by tradition or imperfect copies. But the Pisans, when they took Amalfi, in 1137, are said* to have discovered an entire copy of the Pandects of Justinian,—the work in which (together with its sister publications, the Codex and Institute), the laws of the Roman empire were by the orders of that emperor (about the year 534) collected, classified, and explained. Copies of the treasure were soon multiplied, and it was studied, among others, by Gratian, a monk of Bologna, who conceived the idea of collecting and arranging in a similar way what may be called the statutory and traditional law of the Christian Church. He published, in 1151, under the name of *Decretum*, a collection of the canons of councils, the decrees of popes, and the maxims of the more ancient Fathers, all which branches are included under the general term of Canon Law. The fame of Gratian and his work drew students to Bologna from all parts of Europe, and noted schools of canonists and civilians (for the Roman or civil was studied there *pari passu* with the canon law) grew up at that city. English ecclesiastics resorted there in great numbers, and imported the legal knowledge thus gained into the ecclesiastical courts of their own country. These courts, both on account of the greater simplicity and clearness of the law administered in them, and as less open to be tam-

* See however Hallam's *Literature of Europe*, vol. i. p. 62.

pered with by royal or aristocratic influences, were much resorted to by the laity in preference to the temporal or common law courts. They were consequently the object of keen ill-will among the lawyers, and of jealousy or opposition on the part of the crown. But they seem to have had this good effect, if no other;—that their rivalry stimulated the lawyers to polish, digest, and present in a rational and consistent form, the ancient common law of the land, which otherwise could not have stood its ground against its twin foreign rivals. Hence arose, near the end of the twelfth century, the work of chief justiciary Ranulf de Glanville, *On the Laws and Customs of England*, the earliest extant treatise upon English law.

The chief seat of medical science during this period was the University of Salerno in Italy. This university was in existence before the time of Charlemagne, who founded a college in it. It was known as "the city or commonwealth of Hippocrates" (civitas Hippocratica), and was at the zenith of its reputation in the twelfth century; early in which the *Schola Salernitana*, a learned poem in leonine, or rhyming Latin verses, on the mode of preserving health, was composed and published. In 1225 the University received from the Emperor, Frederic II., the exclusive right of granting medical degrees in his dominions. Like all other sciences at this period, medicine was greatly indebted to the researches of the Arabians, for profiting by which, Salerno, from its position on the Mediterranean, was singularly well fitted.

Science.

Here, too, but for the name of one great Englishman, there would be nothing to detain us long. We have seen how astronomy, and the subsidiary sciences of arithmetic and geometry, were included in the old Quadrivium, the course of study which had struggled down from the

Roman empire. The reason of this lay in the absolute necessity of the thing; for without some degree of astronomical knowledge the calendar could not be computed, and the very church feasts could not be fixed to their proper dates. Moreover, the *ignis fatuus* of astrology — the delusive belief that human events were influenced by the aspects and conjunctions of the heavenly bodies,—led on the student, duped for the benefit of his race, to a more careful study of the phenomena of the heavens than he would otherwise have bestowed. But, besides these long-established studies, scientific teaching in other branches had been ardently commenced in France by Gerbert, as we have seen, early in the eleventh century. But in spite of the intrinsic attractiveness of such studies, they languished and dwindled away. One cause of this is to be found in the suspicion and dislike with which they were popularly regarded. Gerbert was believed to have been a magician, and to have sold his soul to the evil one. Roger Bacon was popularly regarded in England as a sorcerer down to the reign of James I. To trace this feeling to its sources would be a very curious inquiry, but it is one foreign to our present purpose. The second principal cause of this scientific sterility lay in the superior attractiveness of scholasticism. It was pleasanter to be disputatious than to be thoughtful; easier to gain a victory in dialectics than to solve a problem in mechanics. Moreover, men could not distinguish between the applicability of the scholastic method to a subject, such as theology, in which the postulates or first principles were fixed, and its applicability to subjects of which the postulates either had to be discovered, or were liable to progressive change. They tried nature, not by an appeal to facts, but by certain metaphysical canons which they supposed to be impregnable. Thus Roger Bacon says that it was the general belief in his time that hot water exposed to a low temperature in a

vessel would freeze sooner than the same quantity of cold water, because, say the metaphysicians, "*contrarium excitatur per contrarium*"—contraries reciprocally produce each other. "But I have tried it," he says, with amusing earnestness, "and it is not the fact, but the very reverse." It thus happened that Roger Bacon, one of the most profound and penetrating thinkers that ever existed, had no disciples, and left no school behind him. This great anticipator of modern science only serves for a gauge whereby to test the depth and strength of the mediæval intellect; the circumstances of the time did not permit the seed which he cast abroad to fructify.

But few particulars are known of his life. He was born at Ilchester, in Somersetshire, in 1214; received his education at the universities of Oxford and Paris; and, after taking the Franciscan habit, commenced a long life of unbroken study at Oxford. Among his numerous works the most important is the *Opus Majus*, which he dedicated and presented in 1267 to Clement IV. This high-minded and enlightened Pope he had known when, formerly, as Guido, Bishop of Sabina, he had visited England in the capacity of legate. Clamours and accusations were already beginning to be raised against him, for dabbling in unlawful arts; but the Pope promised him his protection, and kept his word. But after the death of Clement the efforts to silence him were renewed, and at a chapter of Franciscans held at Paris, his writings were condemned, and he himself was placed in confinement. For ten years, dating from 1278, he remained a prisoner, and was liberated at last owing to the intercession of some English noblemen with the Pope. He died, according to Anthony Wood, in 1292.

The *Opus Majus* is an investigation of what he calls "the roots of wisdom." The introductory portion discusses at great length, and with masterly handling, the relations between philosophy and religion. Then he treats of *gram-*

matica, or the study of languages, the first and not the least essential of the roots of wisdom, since "from these [languages] the sciences of the Latins have been translated." By "Latins" he means literary men in general, to whom the Latin language was then the medium of thought in all subjects except poetry. Nay, the "Latins" threatened at one time, as we shall see, to engross even the field of poetry. The second "root" is mathematical science, the key, as he justly says, to all other sciences, "the neglect of which now, for these thirty or forty years, has vitiated all the studies of the Latins; for whoever is ignorant of it cannot know the rest of the sciences." Metaphysical disputation, as we have seen, had proved more exciting and attractive. To this part of the work is appended a long geographical treatise, followed by an account of the planets and their influences, which shows that on this point Bacon had succumbed to the solemn nonsense of the Arabian astrologers. The third root is *perspectiva*, or optics, a study to which Bacon had especially devoted himself. The fourth is experimental science, a source of knowledge which, he says, "by the common herd of students is utterly ignored." The whole work is remarkably characterised by that spirit of system in which later English philosophers have been singularly deficient. The study of each of these "roots of wisdom" is recommended, not for its own sake, not for mere intellectual improvement, but on account of the relation which it bears to, and the light which it is able to throw on, the supreme science, Theology. The reasoning is sometimes singular: the study of optics, for instance, is stated to be essential to the right understanding of Holy Scripture, because in such passages as "Guard us, Lord, as the apple of an eye," we cannot fully enter into the meaning of the inspired writer, unless we have learned from this science *how*, and with what a multiplicity of precautions, the apple of the eye is secured from injury.

Means of Education.

We have now to inquire what were the principal means of education which students had at their command during this period. The most important among these were the two universities of Oxford and Cambridge. There seems good reason to believe that the school which Alfred founded was established at Oxford. A more central situation could not be found; it was a royal residence, and the scene of many a great council of the notables of the kingdom in the period intervening between Alfred and the Conquest; nor was it in those times a slight matter, that, standing on the Thames, and commanding by the bridge enclosed in its fortifications the passage of the river, it was equally accessible to those who lived north of Thames, and those who lived south. This distinction is clearly recognized in the Saxon Chronicle, and it probably gave rise to the division of all the students of Oxford into the "nations" of North Englishmen and South Englishmen, a division apparently as old as the University itself. Once established, we may be certain that the school would continue to exist in a precarious way, even in the troubled reigns of Alfred's successors. Perhaps it was at Oxford that Ethelwerd learnt the exceedingly bad Latin in which, about the year 930, he addressed his cousin Matilda, daughter of the Emperor Otho, with the view of supplying her with information as to the early history of their common country. If a well-known passage in Ingulphus be genuine, the University was in active operation in the reign of Edward the Confessor, since Ingulphus asserts that he studied Aristotle and Cicero there. But at the Conquest the dissolution of the University seems to have been nearly complete. Towards the end of the eleventh century it slowly revived, and all during the twelfth century was making slow upward progress.

The lectures of Abelard (1079–1142), the most active thinker of his day, were attended by crowds of Englishmen — John of Salisbury for one, who has left us a curious account of them — and some of his hearers must undoubtedly have opened lectures on similar subjects in the halls of Oxford. But it is not till the thirteenth century that we hear of Oxford as an important educational centre. A great stimulus seems to have been applied in 1229 by the migration of a large body of students from Paris to Oxford. The connection between these two universities was during all this period most intimate; — identity of religion, common studies, and the use of Latin as a common language, produced and maintained it; — they might almost be regarded as two national colleges in an European university. Some of the great men who lectured at Oxford have been already noticed, but there is one, whose connection with the University in this century was long and important, whom we have yet to mention. Robert Grossetête, Bishop of Lincoln, was long a teacher at Oxford, afterwards chancellor, and finally, in his episcopal capacity, *ex officio* head of the University. A man of varied learning, and a great and liberal nature, he was the warm friend and patron of Roger Bacon, and is mentioned by him in terms of high admiration in the *Opus Majus*. The number of students who flocked to Oxford in this and the following century far surpassed anything that has been seen in later times. "We are told that there were in Oxford in 1209 three thousand members of the University, in 1231 thirty thousand, in 1263 fifteen thousand, in 1350 between three and four thousand, and in 1360 six thousand."* All national and local antipathies, all political tendencies, all existing schools of thought, found numerous and ardent representatives at Oxford. We are not therefore surprised to read of a succession of furious fights between the uni-

* Newman's *Office and Work of Universities*, p. 267.

versity "nations" on the one hand, and between the student-body and the townspeople on the other. The monastic orders, though regarded at first by the scholastic body with vehement dislike, both in Oxford and Paris, all at last established houses in, and furnished teachers to, the University;—and it was in the Franciscan monastery that Bacon prosecuted his experiments in physical science. "Halls" and "Inns," unendowed, but licensed by the University, were the primitive arrangement for the accommodation of students;—the first colleges, the main intention of which was to facilitate the education of poor students, were founded in the latter half of the thirteenth century. Merton and University are the first instances of such foundations.

Cambridge, which has trained so many minds of the highest order in more recent times, was comparatively uninfluential in the Middle Ages. About the year 1109 the monks of Croyland, at the instigation apparently of their abbot, Goisfred, who had studied at Orleans, opened a school in a barn at Cambridge. The scheme succeeded; the number of scholars gradually increased; and a large migration of Oxonians in the year 1209 seems to have established the rising university on a permanent basis.*

Monasteries.—Next in importance to the universities as seats of education were the monasteries. These arose rapidly in every part of England after the Norman Conquest. William himself, though he neglected the universities, was a zealous promoter of the monastic institution. "Scarcely did his own munificence," says Malmesbury, "or that of his nobility, leave any monastery unnoticed.

* See Huber: *English Universities*, by F. Newman, a very learned and interesting work, deformed however, by some ludicrous blunders, for which we cannot say whether the author or the editor is responsible. Thus in a quotation in which St. Germanus is spoken of (vol. i. p. 376), "beatus Germanus" is translated "a blessed German!"

. . . . Thus in his time the monastic flock increased on every side;—monasteries arose, ancient in their form, but modern in building." And in a previous passage he had said, speaking of the consequences of the Norman invasion, "You might see churches rise in every village, and monasteries in the towns and cities, built in a style unknown before." This style was of course the round arched Norman architecture, of which the specimens in England are so numerous and so magnificent. Nearly all the monasteries in England, till the introduction of the mendicant orders about 1230, belonged to the Benedictine order, or some branch of it, and the devotion of the Benedictines to learning is well known. Among the houses especially distinguished for the learned men whom they produced were St. Albans, Malmesbury, Canterbury, and Peterborough. Besides the original works composed by monks at this period, we are indebted to their systematic diligence for the preservation of the ancient authors. Every large monastery had its *scriptorium*, in which manuscripts were kept, and the business of transcribing was regularly carried on by monks appointed for the purpose.

Paper.—Among literary helps, few have a more practically powerful influence on the circulation and stimulation of ideas than a plentiful supply of writing material. Literature was grievously hampered up to nearly the end of our period owing to the costliness and scarcity of paper. For the first seven centuries after the Christian era, the material generally used was the papyrus, imported from Egypt. But after the conquest of Egypt by the Mahometans, towards the end of the seventh century, this importation ceased. The place of the papyrus was now supplied by parchment, in itself a much better and more durable material, but so costly that the practice became common of erasing the writing on an old parchment, in order to make room for a new work. A manuscript thus

treated was called a *palimpsest.* When the characters had become much faded through lapse of time, the same motive — scarcity of material — led to the practice of writing a new work across the old one without resorting to erasure. A manuscript so dealt with was called a *codex rescriptus.* But since, in manuscripts of the first kind, the process of erasure was often imperfectly performed, and in those of the second, the old faded letters can often, with a little trouble, be distinguished beneath the newer ones, it has happened that valuable copies, or fragments, of ancient works have in both these ways been recovered.* Paper made from linen or cotton rags is an Arabian invention; and the first paper, nearly resembling that which we now use, was made at Mecca in the year 706. The knowledge of the art soon passed into Spain, and by the Moors was communicated to the Christians. But it was not till towards the close of the thirteenth century that paper mills were established in the Christian states of Spain, whence, in the following century, the art passed into Italy, and became generally diffused.

Poetry.

It may be stated broadly, that from the eleventh to the thirteenth century inclusive, the prose literature of Europe came from churchmen, the poetry from laymen. But in one direction the churchmen made incursions into the domain of their rivals without fear of competition or reprisals. We refer to the Latin poetry of the Middle Ages. Much of this owed its existence to a spirited but hopeless endeavour — one which even Erasmus was disposed to repeat a hundred and fifty years later — to make the Latin the universal language of literature. All the existing vernacular

* The *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus*, at Paris, a manuscript of the Greek Testament of the highest value, written over with a work of St. Ephrem, is a case in point.

tongues — though some were more advanced than others — were not to be compared in respect of regularity and euphony to the Latin; and the poets of the cloister preferred to write elegant hexameters and elegiacs after the model of their beloved Virgil and Ovid rather than engage in a struggle with the harsh dissonances and unmanageable particles of their native speech. One concession they did make to the fashion of their own age, when, forsaking the classic metres, they sought for that measured melody which is the essential form of poetry in the Arabic — or possibly Celtic — invention of rhyme, by this time (1100) completely naturalised in the south of Europe. These Latin rhymes were called Leonine verses. The solemn hymns of the Church — some of which are unsurpassed even as literary compositions — were composed in these rhyming measures; among their authors were St. Anselm, St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Pope Innocent III. The majority of these were written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. No Latin poems of this elevated class were composed by English ecclesiastics, but leonine verse was largely used in this country as a vehicle for satire and humour. There is among the publications of the Camden Society a thick volume of such Latin poems, of many among which the authorship is ascribed to one Walter Mapes or Map, who flourished towards the end of the thirteenth century. But the strict Latinists scouted the idea of any such concessions to a corrupt modern taste; — when they wrote poetry, they used the metres as well as the language of the Latin poets. Thus Geoffrey de Vinesauf, who has been already mentioned among the historians, wrote a Latin poem entitled *De Novâ Poetriâ*, and addressed to Innocent III., the intention of which was to recommend and illustrate the legitimate mode of versification, in opposition to the leonine or barbarous species. Actuated by the same prepossessions, Josephus Iscanus, a monk of Exeter, who flourished about the year 1210,

wrote a long poem in Latin hexameters, entitled *De Bello Trojano* which, to judge of it from the extracts printed by Warton, must have possessed great literary merit. Though now forgotten, it enjoyed so great a popularity even as late as the fifteenth century, as to be thumbed by school-boys in every grammar-school, and ranked by teachers side by side with the genuine poets of Rome.

But this fanatical preference of a dead language, even as the medium for poetry, could not in the nature of things hold its ground. In poetry, the originality of the thought, the vigour and aptness of the expression, are what constitutes the charm; we read it, not that we may learn about *things*, but that we may come in contact with thoughts. But no one can think with perfect freedom except in his native tongue, nor express himself with remarkable degrees of force and fire, unless upon subjects coming closely home to his feelings. To an ecclesiastic, whose home is the church, the church's language may perhaps be considered in one sense as his natural speech, so long as his thoughts are busied with those objects on which her attention and affections are uninterruptedly concentred. Thus no poem more startlingly real, more tender, more awe-inspiring, exists in any language than the wonderful sequence "Dies Iræ, dies illa." But for the themes of love, or war, or gaiety, with which poetry is principally conversant, the Latin could not be so apt a medium as the roughest of the vernacular tongues, since to the ear accustomed to the vivid and expressive utterances on these subjects to which the converse of daily life of necessity gives rise, its phrases must always have seemed cold, flat, and indirect. Hence as the Trouvères and their imitators rise and multiply, the school of Latin poetry dwindles away, and after the middle of the thirteenth century nearly disappears.

The poetry which, strong in its truth to nature, supplanted its more polished rival, was the growth of France;

and to trace its origin, and analyse its many developments, is no part of the task of the historian of English literature. It is necessary, however, that the English student should have some general knowledge of the matter; otherwise he would very imperfectly understand the course of English poetry in this and in the following period.

The French poetry of the age was divided into two schools, the Norman and the Provençal. The poets of the one were called Trouvères, those of the other, Troubadours. The language of the one was the Langue d'oil, that of the other the Langue d'oc.* The poetry of the Trouvères was mostly epic in its character; that of the Troubadours mostly lyric. Each most probably arose independently of the other, although that of the Troubadours sprang the soonest into full maturity, as it was also the first to decline and pass away. The origin of the Provençal literature is to be sought in the amicable intercourse which subsisted during the ninth and tenth centuries between the Moorish and the Christian states of Spain, resulting for the latter in their acquaintance with, and imitation of, the Arabic poetry and prose fiction. The poems of those children of the burning South were distinguished by an almost idolatrous exaltation of the female sex, and an inexhaustible inventiveness in depicting every phase, and imagining every condition, of the passion of love. The Catalan minstrels took up the strain in their own language, which was a variety of the *langue d'oc;* and from Catalonia, upon its being united to a portion of Provence, in 1092, under Raymond Berenger, the newly kindled flame of romantic sentiment and idealizing passion passed into the south of France, and gave birth to the poetry of the Troubadours. Of this poetry, love is the chief, though not the sole, inspiration. It neglects the

* So called from the different words signifying "yes" in the two languages.

realities of life; it is impatient of historical themes which require learning and toil; it is essentially fugitive — subjective — conventional. In a certain sense it may be called *abstract* poetry, since throughout a large portion of it the reader is removed from the world of concrete existences, and placed in an imaginary realm, peopled by beings who own no laws but the conventional decrees of a Court of Love, and know no higher ambition than that of being a successful suitor. Such a style evidently contains within itself the germ of a certain dissolution, unless it admit of change and enrichment from without. But external circumstances accelerated the fall of the literature of the Troubadours; the bloody wars of which the south of France was the theatre during the early part of the thirteenth century, silenced the minstrel's lute, and substituted the wail of the mourner for the song of the lover. Attempts were subsequently made, down even to the fifteenth century, to revive the ancient style; but they failed to impart to it more than a transient and factitious vitality. But in its flourishing time, the Gay Science was eagerly cultivated in every part of Western Europe, and kings were proud to rank themselves among its members. Our own Richard Cœur-de-Lion not only entertained at his court some of the most celebrated Troubadours of Provence, but himself composed several *sirventes* which are still extant. A *tenson*, the joint composition of himself and his favourite minstrel Blondel, is said, according to the well-known story in Matthew Paris, to have been the means of Blondel's discovering the place of the king's confinement in Germany.

Almost the whole of the poetry of the Troubadours falls under two heads; the *tenson* and the *sirvente*.* The former was a kind of literary duel, or dialogue contro-

* *Tenson* is connected by Raynouard with "contention." Ducange explains *sirventes* as "poemata in quibus *servientium*, seu militum, facta et *servitia* referuntur."

versial, between two rival Troubadours, on some knotty point of amatory ethics, and often took place before, and was decided by, a Court of Love. To these courts we shall again have occasion to refer when we come to speak of Chaucer. The latter was employed on themes of war or politics or satire. Among the most eminent composers of *sirventes* were Bertrand de Born, the gifted knight of Perigord, whose insidious suggestions kept alive for years the feud which divided our Henry II. and his sons, — Peyrols, a knight of Auvergne, — and Sordello of Mantua. Bertrand and Sordello both figure in the great poem of Dante, the one in the Inferno, the other in the Purgatorio. Poems by these, and many other Troubadours, may be found in the great work of M. Raynouard on the Provençal poetry.

But the poetry of the Trouvères had a far more important and lasting influence over our early English literature than that of the Troubadours. We may arrange it under four heads : — Romances, Fabliaux, Satires, and Historical Poetry. To the first head belong, besides a great number of poems on separate subjects, four great epic cycles of romance ; the first relating to Charlemagne, the second to Arthur and the Round Table, the third to the crusades for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre, and the fourth to the ancient world and its heroes, especially Alexander the Great. Of the romances relating to Charlemagne, the oldest is the *Chanson de Roland*, a narrative of the last battle and death of the brave Roland on the field of Roncesvalles. This poem, although in the shape in which we now have it, it was not written down earlier than the twelfth century, in its primitive form is believed to date from the reign of Louis le Débonnaire.* The metre is the ten-syllable rhyming couplet. Among the more celebrated pieces in this cycle are the *Four Sons of Aymon*, *Roland and Ferrabras*, and *Ogier le Danois*. A direct

* Démogeot, *Hist. de la Lit. Française.*

proof of the high antiquity of some portions at least of the Charlemagne romance is found in the lines in which Richard Wace (who wrote about 1155) describes the proceedings of the Norman minstrel Taillefer, just before the battle of Hastings:—

> "Taillefer, qui moult bien chantait,
> Sur un cheval qui tot allait,
> Devant le duc allait chantant
> De Charlemagne et de Rolland,
> Et d'Olivier et des vassaux
> Qui moururent à Roncevaux."

The next cycle, that of Arthur, was unquestionably founded upon the national and patriotic songs of Wales and Brittany. At the courts of the petty kingdoms of Wales, which for centuries, while the Saxons were fighting with each other or struggling against the Danes, seem to have enjoyed comparative prosperity and peace, the Welsh bards, feeding their imagination on the memory of the gallant stand made by their patriot prince against the Teutonic hordes, gradually wove a beautiful tissue of romantic poetry, of which the central figure was Arthur. The songs in which his exploits were celebrated naturally made their way among their self-exiled brethren in Brittany, and, perhaps, were by them added to and embellished. From Brittany they easily passed into the rest of France, and by the congenial imaginations of the Norman poets were eagerly welcomed. This is the *direct* influence of Brittany upon the formation of the Arthur cycle; and it is exemplified in the romance of *Iwain* or *Owen*, composed in French by Chrétien of Troyes, about the year 1160, after the Breton original by Jehann Vaour. There was also an *indirect* or reflex influence, communicated through the British history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, which, as we have seen, is stated by its author to have been translated from a work in the Breton language. Geoffrey reproduced this work in Latin, adding probably

a good deal from original Welsh sources, and the result was the *Historia Britonum*. This Latin history became exceedingly popular, and was resorted to by the Trouvères as a secondary mine of information respecting Arthur and the Round Table. The earliest form of these French romances was unquestionably metrical, but it has happened that the original poems have in some instances been lost, so that the oldest existing versions of portions of the cycle are in French prose. The authors of these prose versions — as Luke Gast, Walter Mapes, and Robert Broom —appear to have been natives of England.

Of the third cycle, that relating to the crusades, the most important piece is the famous romance of Richard Cœur-de-Lion.

The leading poem of the fourth cycle is the *Alexandreis*, the joint work of Lambert li Cors and Alexander of Paris, published in 1184. The extraordinary success of this poem caused the metre in which it was composed (the twelve-syllable rhyming couplet) to be known thenceforth by the name of *Alexandrine*.

The Fabliau, or Metrical Tale, aimed, not at singing the actions of heroes, but at describing, in an amusing, striking way, the course of real life. It was to the chivalrous romance what comedy is to tragedy — comedy, that is to say, like that of Menander, not like that of Aristophanes; it is not political, and does not attack individuals, but paints society and phases of character. With a frequent touch of satire, or flavour of cynicism, the Fabliau is upon the whole an account of the every-day life and manners of the time, of which it conveys no very pleasing or edifying impression. Many fabliaux were drawn from eastern sources; *e. g.*, the famous Indian tale of the *Seven Wise Masters*, which has been rendered or imitated in so many different languages.

The glaring inconsistencies which this world presents between promise and performance —between theory and

practice — give rise in every age to satire. Every village has its satirist, who with greater or less skill exposes the hypocrite, and ridicules the dupe. It is quite a secondary question whether the satire current in any particular age finds or misses literary expression. In the Middle Ages the great literary movement of France, which we are now considering, could not fail to extend to satire also. And as deficient practice and performance are nowhere so offensive as when they accompany the grandest theories and the most uncompromising professions, it was natural that the vices of ministers of the Church, that one powerful European institution, the very grandeur of which made it a more obvious mark, should be the principal theme of mediæval satirists. The continuation of the *Roman de la Rose*, by Jean de Meun, composed about the end, and the famous tale of *Reynard the Fox*, composed about the middle, of the thirteenth century, are full of satirical attacks upon men in high places and established institutions, in all which the clergy come in for the principal share of invective.

Historical Poetry.—The period which produced so many Latin chronicles for circulation among the clergy, gave birth also to French chronicles in verse for the entertainment of the laity. In verse, — because few laymen could read, and a history in rhyme was easier and more agreeable to remember, both for the reciter and for the hearer. We do not hear of prose chronicles in French, still less in English, until the next period, by which time a reading and cultivated lay audience had been formed. The chief name of note among these French metrical chroniclers is that of Maitre Wace, a learned clerk, born in Jersey, near the end of the eleventh century, and educated in Normandy. His first history, the *Brut d'Angleterre* (Chronicle of England), is in the main a translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britonum* before mentioned, and ends with the year 680. His second work,

the *Roman de Rou* (Rollo), is a history of the Dukes of Normandy, reaching down to 1170, the sixteenth year of Henry II. Part of this latter work is in the Alexandrine measure; the remaining portion, and all the *Brut d'Angleterre* are in the eight-syllable romance metre. Another chronicler, Benoit, also composed, at the desire of Henry II., a history of the Dukes of Normandy, which appeared some years after that of Wace. Wace died about the year 1175.

The English poetry of the period bears witness, as we have said, in almost every line, to the powerful foreign influences amid which it grew up, and to which it owed the chief part of its inspiration. It may be arranged, therefore, under the same four heads as the French poetry; to these, however, we will add two others, religious poems, and occasional poems; since it is in these compositions that we first find a marked originality, a promise of an independent growth to come.

English versions or imitations of the popular French romances began to be multiplied towards the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries. For a particular account of these English romances, the reader may consult the excellent work of Ellis.* Besides the two heroic subjects, Charlemagne and Arthur, (the heroes of classical antiquity seem to have been less popular with the English versifiers,) the crusades, particularly the one in which King Richard was engaged, and many miscellaneous topics, are handled by these writers. Yet even *Guy of Warwick*, *Bevis of Hamptoun*, and *Richard Cœur-de-Lion*, though the names have such a local and national sound, were founded upon French originals, the authors of which, indeed, were probably Englishmen, but derived from France their literary culture.

Scarcely any English versions of Fabliaux are known to exist of earlier date than 1350. The raillery and more

* *Specimens of Early English Romances.*

refined touches which belong to this class of compositions were not suited to the rude intelligences of the English-speaking population in the Norman period, and would have been utterly thrown away upon them. The only instance of a fabliau given by Ellis is the version of the Indian story before mentioned of the *Seven Wise Masters*, supposed to have been made from the French about the year 1330.

Under the head of satire, there exists a curious poem, entitled the *Land of Cokaygne*, the date of which is not certainly known, though Warton is undoubtedly wrong in placing it as early as the twelfth century. It is a biting satire on the monastic orders, and bears the stamp of the flippant age of Boccaccio rather than that of the grave and earnest century of St. Bernard. Nothing is known about the author, nor is the French original, from which it was evidently taken, in existence.

Of the metrical chroniclers, who, in imitation of Wace and his fellow-labourers, related the history of England in English verse for the entertainment of the laity, the earliest in date is Layamon, a monk of Ernley-on-Severn, in Gloucestershire, who about the close of the twelfth century produced an amplified imitation of Wace's *Brut d'Angleterre*. This curious work, the earliest existing poem of considerable magnitude in the English language, extends to about 14,000 long lines of four accents. To produce the effect of metre, Layamon employs both alliteration and rhyme, both of the rudest description; sometimes, too, he seems unable to achieve either the one or the other. The writer seems to have been balancing between the example of his French prototype, who uses rhyme, and the attractions of the old native Saxon poets, who employed nothing but alliteration. This may be seen even in the following short extract, borrowed from Ellis's specimens :—

"Tha the king wes i-seten
Mid his monnen to his mete
To than kinge com tha biscop,
Seind Dubrig, the was swa god;
And nom of his hafde
His kinc-helm hæhne
(For than mucle golde
The king hine beren n'alde)
And dude enne lasse crune
On thas kinge's hafde.
And seoth-then he gon do
Athere quene alswo."

The language of Layamon is far less altered from the Saxon than that of the concluding portion of the *Saxon Chronicle*, although its date is some forty years later. The reason of this clearly is, that he lived in a remote country district, being priest of Areley-on-Severn,* a village in the north-western corner of Worcestershire, and held scarcely any intercourse with men of Norman lineage. Not more than fifty non-Saxon words have been detected in the entire work.

An interval of nearly a hundred years separates Layamon from the next of the rhyming chroniclers, Robert of Gloucester. Robert, as he follows Geoffrey of Monmouth, travels partly over the same ground as Layamon, whose prototype, Wace, also followed Geoffrey. But in everything else but their subject, the difference between the two chroniclers is enormous. Divest Robert of his strange orthography, and he becomes a readable, intelligible English writer. A monk of a great monastery in an important frontier city, his style is that of a man who is fully *au courant* with the civilisation, and familiar with the literature of his age, while Layamon's bespeaks the simple parish priest, moving among a rustic population, whose barbarous dialect he with a meritorious audacity adapts as best he can to literary purposes. Robert's chronicle, which is in long fourteen-syllable lines, is continued to the

* So the village of Ernley is now called.

year 1272. To Robert of Gloucester succeeds Robert Manning, a monk of the Gilbertine monastery of Brunne, or Bourn, in South Lincolnshire. Manning composed a rhyming chronicle in two parts: the first, a translation of the everlasting *Brut* by Wace, of which the reader has already heard so much; the second, a version of Peter Langtoft's French metrical chronicle, ending with the death of Edward I. in 1307. The opening of the second part explains so simply and clearly the motives which induced the rhyming chroniclers to employ themselves on a task which to our modern notions involves a strange misapplication of poetical power, that we think it right to insert it here: —

"Lordynges that be now here,
If ye wille listene and lere
All the story of Inglande,
Als Robert Mannyng wryten it fand,
And on Inglysch has it schewed
Not for the lered but for the lewed;
For tho that on this lond wonn
That the Latin ne Frankys conn,
For to hauf solace and gamen
In felauschip when tha sitt samen;
And it is wisdom for to wytten
The state of the land, and hef it wryten,
What manere of folk first it wan,
And of what kynde it first began;
And gude it is for many thynges
For to here the dedis of kynges,
Whilk were foles, and whilk were wyse,
And whilk of tham couth most quantyse;
And whilk did wrong, and whilk ryght,
And whilk mayntened pes and fight.
Of thare dedes sall be mi sawe,
In what tyme, and of what law,
I sholl yow [tell], from gre to gre,
Sen the tyme of Sir Noe."

Manning's language, though his chronicle is said to have been not finished till the year 1338, is scarcely, if at all, more polished than that of Robert of Gloucester.

Of the numerous religious poems in English which remain to us from this period, some are metrical versions of psalms; some (as Bishop Grossetête's *Manuel des Péchés*, translated by Robert Manning), didactic poems on some point of Christian doctrine or morality; some, Lives of Saints; some, lastly, short poems on devotional topics, such as the *Crucifixion*, and the *Blessed Virgin under the Rood*. In each of these classes poems are extant, the antiquated style and language of which require us to place them as early as the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century. In one or two poems of the last class, passages of which are given by Warton, there shines out from under the terrible barbarism of the language, a beautiful pathos, and a tender purity of devotion; so that it would be a good work if some competent person were so far to modernize them as to make them accessible to modern readers.

The religious poems were probably written by ecclesiastics; but the *occasional* and *miscellaneous* poems of the period are evidently for the most part the productions of laymen. Some of these will come under review in the critical section of this volume; but there is one which the certainty of its date, and the remarkable character of its contents, render so important in an historical point of view, that it must be noticed here. This is a poem (given by Warton *in extenso*) composed after the battle of Lewes in 1264, by an adherent of Simon de Montfort. The number of French words which it contains, and the vigour and ease with which they are handled, unite to prove that the new English language was well on in the process of formation, conditioned always by the necessity, which this writer frankly accepts, of incorporating a vast number of French words, expressive of the ideas which England owed to the Norman invasion. Again, the broad hearty satire, the strong anti-royalist, or rather anti-foreigner, prejudices of the writer, the energy of resolution which

the lines convey, point unmistakably to the rise, which indeed must any way be dated from this reign, of a distinct English nationality, uniting and reconciling the Norman and Saxon elements. A portion of this poem is subjoined —

"Sitteth alle stille, and herkneth to me;
The kyng of Alemaigne, bi mi leautè,
Thritti thousent pound askede he,
For te make the pees in the countrè,
Ant so he dude more.
Richard, thah thou be ever trichard*,
Tricthen shalt thou never more.
* * * *

"The kyng of Alemaigne wende† do ful wel,
He saisede the mulne‡ for a castel,
With hare § sharpe swerdes he grounde the stel,
He wende that the sayles were mangonel ‖,
To helpe Wyndesore.
Richard, &c.
* * * *

"Sire Simond de Mountfort hath suore bi ys chyn,
Hevede ¶ he now here the erl of Waryn,
Shuld he never more come to is yn **,
Ne with sheld, ne with spere, ne with other gyn††,
To helpe of Wyndesore.
Richard," &c.

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* Treacherous. † Weened. ‡ Mill. § Their. ‖ A military engine. ¶ Had. ** His inn. †† Engine.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY ENGLISH PERIOD.

1350—1450.

HITHERTO such English writers as we have met with since the Conquest have generally appeared in the humble guise of translators or imitators. In the period before us we at last meet with original invention applied on a large scale: this, therefore, is the point at which English literature takes its true commencement.

The Latin and French compositions, which engaged so much of our attention in the previous period, may in this be disposed of in a few words. That Englishmen still continued to write French poetry, we have the proof in many unprinted poems by Gower, and might also infer from a passage, often quoted, in the prologue to Chaucer's *Testament of Love*. But few such pieces are of sufficient merit to bear printing. In French prose scarcely anything can be mentioned besides the despatches, treaties, &c., contained in Rymer's *Fœdera* and similar compilations, and the original draft of Sir John Mandevile's *Travels in the Holy Land*. Froissart's famous *Chronicle* may, indeed, almost be considered as belonging to us, since it treats principally of English feats of arms, and its author held a post in the court of Edward III. Of Latin poetry we have hardly a single specimen. In Latin prose, we have a version, made by himself, of Mandevile's *Travels*, and the chroniclers, Robert de Avesbury, William Knyghton, Ralph Higden, and John Fordun. In theology and philosophy, original speculation appeared no more; comments on the *Liber Sententiarum* and the *Summa* of St. Thomas, besides a number of theological tracts, chiefly devotional, were all that this period produced.

The obvious cause of the decline of French and Latin composition in England was the growing prevalence, social and literary, of the native speech. To this many circumstances contributed. The gradual consolidation of nationalities, which had long been making steady progress throughout Europe, had been constantly drawing the Norman barons and the English commonalty closer together, and separating both from the rival nationality of France. Nor had the nation at any time lost, so to speak, its personal identity: it was *England* for which the Norman Richard fought at Acre; and even William of Malmesbury, writing not a hundred years after the Conquest, speaks of that event rather as a change of dynasty occurring in *English* history, than as of a complete social revolution. The influence of the Church must have pressed powerfully in the same direction. Though the Conqueror filled nearly all the sees with Normans, it was not long before native Englishmen, through that noble respect for and recognition of human equality which were maintained in the midst of feudalism by the Church of the Middle Ages, obtained a fair proportion of them. The political and official power of bishops in those days was great, and the native tongue of an English Archbishop of Canterbury could not, even by the proud Norman barons, his compeers in Parliament, be treated with disrespect. Again, since 1340, England and France had been constantly at war: in this war the English-speaking archers, not the French-speaking barons, had won the chief laurels; and the tongue of a humbled beaten enemy was likely to be less attractive to the mass of Englishmen than ever. The well-known law of Edward III., passed in 1362, directing the English language to be used thenceforward in judicial pleadings, was merely an effect of the slow but resistless operation of these and other cognate causes. Again, it must not be lost sight of, that a sort of tacit compromise passed between the English and French-speaking por-

tions of the population: the former were to retain the entire grammar — so much, at least, as was left of it — of the native speech; all the conjunctions, prepositions, and pronouns, — the osseous structure, so to speak, of the language, — were to be English; while, in return, the Normans were to be at liberty to import French nouns, adjectives, and verbs at discretion, without troubling themselves to hunt for the corresponding terms in the old literary Anglo-Saxon. Finally, this English language, so re-cast, became in the fourteenth century the chosen instrument of thought and expression for a great poet; and, after Chaucer, no Englishman could feel ashamed of his native tongue, nor doubt of its boundless capabilities.

Of the parentage of Geoffrey Chaucer nothing is known, but we have his own word for it* that London was the place of his birth. The year seems to have been 1328†, that in which Edward III. married Philippa of Hainault. Leland, writing in the time of Henry VIII., says that he was "*nobili loco natus*," but he gives no authority for the statement. Godwin's supposition, founded upon a number of minute allusions scattered through his works, that his father was a merchant, or burgess of London, seems to be much more probable.

That he was educated at a university is certain, but whether at Oxford or Cambridge is not so clear. There is a passage in the *Court of Love*, line 912,—

> "Philogenet I called am ferre and nere,
> Of Cambridge clerk;"

which seems to tell in favour of Cambridge. On the other hand, it is known that his most intimate friends and disciples, Gower, Strode, and Occleve, were Oxford men. In

* In the *Testament of Love.*

† This, however, is merely a conjecture of Speght (writing in 1597) coupling the date—1400—on the tombstone with Leland's assertion that he lived to the "period of grey hairs."

1359 he served in the great army of invasion which Edward III. led over into France. In the course of this bootless expedition Chaucer was taken prisoner, but seems to have been released at the peace of Bretigny, in 1360. His marriage with Philippa Rouet is thought to have taken place in the same year. This lady was a native of Hainault, and maid of honour to Queen Philippa. Her sister Catherine was the third wife of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. These circumstances readily explain Chaucer's long and close connection with the court, commencing with the year 1367, when the king granted him a pension of twenty marks for life, under the designation of "*dilectus valettus noster*." His prudence and practical wisdom seem to have been as conspicuous as his more brilliant gifts, since he was at various times employed by the king on important diplomatic missions. One of these took him to Italy in 1373, in which year he is thought with the highest probability to have become acquainted with Petrarch, who was then living at Arqua, near Padua. What other sense can be attached to the famous passage in the prologue to the *Clerk's Tale?*—

> "I wil you telle a tale, which that I
> Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
> As proved by his wordes and his werk;
> He is now dead, and nayled in his chest,
> Now God give his soule wel good rest!
> Fraunces Petrark, the laureat poete,
> Highte this clerk, whose rhetorike swete
> Enlumynd all Ytail of poetrie,
> As Linian did of philosophie."

Petrarch died in 1374, so that the acquaintance could not have been formed at the time of Chaucer's second visit to Italy, in 1378.

In 1374 Chaucer was appointed to the lucrative office of Comptroller of the Customs in the port of London. About the time of the king's death, in 1377, he was employed on

more than one secret and delicate mission, of one of which the object was to negotiate the marriage of Richard II. with a French princess. The new king granted him a second pension of the same amount as the first. In 1386 he sat as a burgess for the county of Kent in the parliament which met at Westminster. John of Gaunt, his friend and patron, was at this time absent upon an expedition to Portugal; and the Duke of Gloucester, another of the king's uncles, a man of cruel and violent character, succeeded in this parliament in driving the king's friends out of office, and engrossing all political power in the hands of himself and his party. In November of the same year a commission was appointed, through the Duke's influence, armed with general and highly inquisitorial powers extending over the royal household and all the public departments. In December we find that Chaucer was dismissed from his office as comptroller. It is evident that these two circumstances stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect. The commission may perhaps have seized upon the pretext of some official irregularities (for Chaucer received the appointment under stringent conditions), but it is clear that he suffered in common with the rest of the king's friends and favourites, not on account of his "connection with the Duke of Lancaster," but simply as a courtier.* This view of the matter is confirmed by the fact that in 1389, in which year Richard broke loose from his uncle's tutelage and dismissed him and his satellites, we find that Chaucer was appointed to the office of Clerk of the King's Works. In the interval he had been reduced to such distress as to be compelled to dispose of his pensions. From some unascertained cause he ceased to hold this new situation some time in the year 1391. Three years afterwards the king conferred on him a fresh pension of twenty pounds a year for life, to which

* Mr. Bell, in the Life prefixed to his excellent edition of Chaucer, seems to have misapprehended this transaction.

Henry IV. in the first year of his reign (1399) added a pension of forty marks. Except these dry facts, we have absolutely no certain knowledge respecting the last ten years of Chaucer's life; but it is satisfactory to reflect that the last days of the father of English poetry were at least spent in external comfort and free from the troubles of poverty.

Thus far no mention has been made of Chaucer's writings, the composition of most of which there is no means of accurately assigning to this or that year of his life. These must now be considered, but historically only, not critically. All that will be attempted here is, after enumerating his principal works, to determine so far as possible their approximate dates, to describe the various literary materials which he had at his disposal, and to show the different degrees in which the use of those materials, and his own genius, as developed through the circumstances which surrounded him, influenced his work.

For reasons presently to be mentioned, we have arranged the poet's chief works in the following order: —

The Assembly of Foules The Flower and the Leaf The Court of Love	First period.
Chaucer's Dreme (about 1360) Boke of the Duchesse (about 1370) Romaunce of the Rose House of Fame	Second period.
Troylus and Creseide The Knight's Tale (and perhaps others of the Canterbury Tales)	Third period.
Legende of Good Women The Prologue, and many of the Canterbury Tales The Astrolabie (1391) The Testament of Love	Fourth period.

The works of the first period are by general consent

assigned to Chaucer's youth. It is usual to reckon the *Court of Love* as the earliest of all, and to assign it to his eighteenth year, because the seventh stanza begins, —

"When I was yonge, at eighteen yeres of age."

But the direct inference from these words, as Mr. Bell remarks, is that the poem was written some time *after* the poet's eighteenth year. Mr. Bell, however, considers the modest, self-depreciating tone in which the poem opens, as conclusive of the fact, that it was composed in early youth. But this test is wholly fallacious, since similar protestations of ignorance and unskilfulness in his art are of constant occurrence all through Chaucer's works. They occur, for instance, in the *Testament of Love*, one of the very latest.* On the other hand, the smoothness of the versification, the perfect command over the resources of the language, and the finish of the poem generally, seem to bespeak the master's rather than the tyro's hand. A passage in the *Assembly of Foules*, implying that the poet had as yet no personal experience in love, is a more unequivocal evidence of early composition.† For this reason we have placed that poem the first on the list.

The link of connection between the poems of the first period is this, that they all betray in the strongest manner the influence of the ideas and language of the Provençal poets. This influence need not, as Warton remarks, have been direct; it may have come to Chaucer, not immediately from the Troubadours, but mediately through the Trouvères; but of its Provençal origin there can be no doubt. It was in Provence that the strange practice arose among

* "Certes I wote wel, there shall be made more scorne and jape of me, that I, *so unworthily clothed altogither in the cloudie cloude of unconning*, will putten me in prees to speke of love."

† "For al be that I knowe not Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quiteth folk hir hire,
Yet happeth me ful oft in bokes rede
Of his myracles, and of his cruel ire."

the poets of parodying the theologians; for the sacred names of religion, they had their god of Love, and his mother Venus; for disputations in the schools upon theological theses, they had their "tensons" in knightly or royal halls upon various knotty points in love; and for the solemn tribunals of ecclesiastical councils, their regularly organised "Courts of Love," to decide the debate between rival Troubadours. All these characteristics are copiously illustrated in those of Chaucer's works which we have here grouped together.

The works of the second period indicate, not Provençal, but Norman-French influences. They are all written in that short eight-syllable metre which the Trouvères usually employed for their romances and fabliaux. The *House of Fame,* evidently the production of Chaucer's mature age, a poem showing much thought and learning, is quite in the style, no less than in the metre, of the Fabliaux. The *Romaunce of the Rose* is a translation of the long, allegorical poem bearing that title, begun by Guillaume de Lorris (died 1260), and continued by Jean de Meun. Chaucer translated the whole of Lorris's portion, extending to more than four thousand lines, and about three thousand six hundred out of the eighteen thousand lines which form Jean de Meun's continuation.

The poems classed under the third period are marked by the influence of Italian literature. *Troylus and Creseide* is a free translation from the *Filostrato* of Boccaccio; the *Knight's Tale* is a version of the same author's *Theseide;* and the general plan of the *Canterbury Tales* was clearly suggested by that of the *Decameron.* The ten friends, assembled during the prevalence of the plague in a country house outside the walls of Florence, and beguiling the tedium of a ten days' quarantine by each telling a story daily, are represented in the English poem by the thirty-two pilgrims, bound to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, each of whom (except the host)

binds himself to tell a story for the amusement of the company, both going and returning. Several others of the *Canterbury Tales*, besides the *Knight's Tale*, are from Italian sources. The clerk says expressly, in his prologue, that he learned the tale of Grisilde from Petrarch.

In the works of the fourth period, though extraneous influences may of course be detected, Chaucer's original genius is predominant. The *Legende of Good Women* was written to make amends for the many disparaging reflections which Chaucer had cast in former works on woman's truth and constancy in love. Alcestis, the self-sacrificing wife of Admetus, whom in the *Court of Love* he names as queen and mistress under Venus in the castle of Love, imposes the following task upon her poet: —

> "Now wol I seyne what penance thou shalt do
> For thy trespas, understonde yt here; —
> Thow shalt while that thou livest, yere by yere,
> The most partye of thy tyme spende
> In making of a glorious legende
> Of good wymmen, maydenes, and wyves,
> That weren trewe in loving all hire lyves."

The late date of the composition of the poem is ascertained by the mention in it of most of his principal works: —

> "Thou hast translated the *Romaunce of the Rose*,
> That is an heresye ayeins my law"

And —

> "And of Cresyde thou hast seyde as the lyste."

Again —

> "He made the boke that hight the Hous of Fame,
> And eke the death of Blaunche the Duchesse,
> And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,
> And al the Love of Palamon and Arcite
> Of Thebes, thogh the story is knowen lyte."

The "Love of Palamon and Arcyte" is the *Knight's*

Tale, the first and longest of the series. The mention of this as a separate work confirms the opinion that many of the *Canterbury Tales* were in circulation independently, before they were brought together and fitted into the general framework of the poem.

The prologue to the Tales was probably the latest, or nearly the latest, part of the work. It consists of sketches, drawn with a spirit, life, and humour inexpressible, of the thirty-two Canterbury pilgrims. The *Astrolabie* is a treatise on astronomy, composed in 1391, for the use of Chaucer's second son, Louis. It opens thus: "Lytel Lowys my sonne, I perceive well by certain evidences thyne abylytè to lerne sciences touching nombres and proporcions." "Lytel Lowys" was at the time ten years old. The *Testament of Love* will be considered when we come to speak of the prose writings of the period. It is probably impossible to fix with exactness the date of its composition. He mentions in it that he has been "berafte out of dignity of office," words which might apply either to his dismissal from the office of Comptroller of Customs in 1386, or to his losing the appointment of Clerk of the King's Works in 1391.

The *Canterbury Tales*, therefore, as a whole, belong to the last period of Chaucer's life, when his judgment and insight into character, developed by a long and wisely-used experience, were at their height, while his imagination gave no sign of growing dim. The machinery of the poem has been already in part explained. Of the thirty-two persons forming the company of pilgrims, one, the host of the Tabard, the inn in Southwark from which they start, is the guide and chief of the expedition. He is to tell no tale himself, but to be the judge of those which the other pilgrims tell. If the scheme announced in the prologue (that each pilgrim should tell two tales) had been fully executed, we should thus have sixty-two tales. In fact, there are but twenty-four, two of which are told by

Chaucer, and a third by the Chanounes Yeoman, who is not one of the original party, but, with his master, joins the pilgrims on the road. This incompleteness is in marked contrast to the symmetrical exactness with which the less ambitious plan of the *Decameron* is worked out.

Chaucer was the centre of a group of literary men, of whom he was the friend or master; who admired and loved him, and in most cases strove to imitate him, though with very indifferent success. Of these, John Gower, the "ancient Gower" of Shakspeare, was the chief. Scarcely anything is known about him, except that he graduated at Oxford, and was rich. He wrote many French poems, evidently conceiving that by so doing he found a larger audience than by writing in English. At the end of one of these, he says,—

> "*A l'université de tout le monde*
> Johan Gower ceste balade envoie."

His principal production was a work in three parts, respectively entitled *Speculum Meditantis*, *Vox Clamantis*, and *Confessio Amantis*. The *Speculum* is in French rhymes, in ten books; it was never printed, but there is a manuscript in the Bodleian Library. The poem, according to Warton, "displays the general nature of virtue and vice, enumerates the felicities of conjugal fidelity by examples selected from various authors, and describes the path which the reprobate ought to pursue for the recovery of the divine grace." The *Vox Clamantis*, a poem in Latin elegiacs, in seven books, also never printed, is in substance a history of the insurrection of the Commons, under Wat Tyler, in the reign of Richard II. The *Confessio Amantis*, an English poem in eight books, written in the short romance metre of eight syllables, was finished in 1393. It has been frequently printed. Imitating the fantastic and exaggerated language of the Troubadours, Gower presents us in this poem with a

long colloquy between a lover and his confessor, who is a priest of Venus. Their conversation consists in great part of learned disquisitions upon politics, astrology, and physiology, stuffed with all the crude absurdities which suited the coarse palate of that age. Apart from this sham science, the work may be described as a collection of tales or fabliaux, the materials of which are gathered from various sources, but chiefly from the *Gesta Romanorum*, and other vast compilations, which, under the name of *Universal Histories*, in which the smallest modicum of fact was diluted in an incredible quantity of fiction, amused and edified the naïve credulity of the Middle Age.

If chronological order had been strictly followed, the author of the *Vision of Piers Plowman* should have been mentioned before Gower, if not before Chaucer. His name, according to Warton, was Robert Langlande; — he was a fellow of Oriel College, and a secular priest. The poem is allegorical, and, like many of Chaucer's, describes a vision seen in a dream. It extends to about 14,000 short, or 7,000 long lines, of two or four accents. It is written throughout with a didactic purpose, which often appears in the form of special satire on particular classes or professions. Abuses in religion, and the mal-practices of ecclesiastics, form, as might be expected, the chief mark for this satire. A crowd of allegorical personages, representing different types of human character, after being brought to repentance by the preaching of Reason, earnestly desire to find out the way to the abode of Truth; their authorised spiritual guides do not know the road; — and it is "Piers the ploughman" from whom they at last obtain the guidance which they require. The metre is alliterative, like that of the old Saxon poets. The writer seems to address himself to a class socially inferior to that which Chaucer and Gower sought to please, — a class, therefore, almost purely Saxon, and likely to

receive with pleasure a work composed in the old rhythm dear to their forefathers. The Vision is determined by internal allusions to about the year 1362. *Piers Plowman's Crede*, a poem in the same metre, consisting of 1,697 short lines, was composed after Wicliffe's death (1384) by one of his followers. In reading it one is strongly reminded of the Puritan writers of the sixteenth century.

Thomas Occleve flourished about the year 1420. From an unprinted metrical version of a Latin political treatise, Warton extracts a pathetic lament by this poet upon the death of Chaucer:—

> "But welaway! so is mine hertè wo,
> That the honour of English tongue is dead,
> Of which I wont was han * counsel and rede!
> O mayster dere, and fadir reverent," &c.

His works were never printed, and are said to be not worth printing.

John Lydgate, a Benedictine monk of Bury St. Edmunds, who flourished about 1425, was also an admirer and imitator of Chaucer. He was, as a writer, less gifted than voluminous; Ritson, in his *Bibliographia Poetica*, has enumerated two hundred and fifty-one of his productions; and this list is known to be incomplete. No writer was ever more popular in his own day, or perhaps less deserved his popularity. His versification is intolerably rough and inharmonious; as unlike as possible to the musical movement of Chaucer; his stories are prolix and dull, and his wit usually pointless. Instead of, like Chaucer, filling his ear and feeding his imagination with the poetry of Italy, the only country where literature had as yet emerged from barbarism and assumed forms comparable to those of antiquity, Lydgate's attention seems to have

* To have.

been engrossed, partly by the inane Latin literature* of the period, partly by the works of the romance writers and Trouvères, whose French was at that time a barbarous dialect, and whose rhythm was nearly as bad as his own. A selection from his minor poems was edited by Mr. Halliwell for the Percy Society, in 1840. His longer works are, —the *Storie of Thebes*, translated from Statius; the *Falls of Princes* (translated from a French paraphrase of Boccaccio's work *De Casibus*); and the *History of the Siege of Troy*. This last, a free version of Guido Colonna's Latin prose history, was undertaken at the command of Henry V. in 1412, and finished in 1420. The *Falls of Princes* are described by himself as a series of *Tragedies*. All these three works are in the heroic rhyming measure.

Among the minor poets of this period, there is none so well deserving of notice as Lawrence Minot, whose poems were accidentally discovered by Mr. Tyrrhwitt among the Cottonian MSS. in the British Museum, near the close of the last century. They celebrate the martial exploits of Edward III., from the battle of Halidon Hill in 1333 to the taking of Guisnes Castle in 1352, and would seem to have been composed contemporaneously with the events described. They are in the same stanza of six short lines, common among the romancers, in which Chaucer's *Rime of Sir Thopas* is written. Nothing is known of Minot's personal history.

Scottish Poets :— Barbour; James I.

John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, is the author of a heroic poem entitled *The Bruce*, containing the history of Robert Bruce, the victor of Bannockburn, and of Scotland, so far as that was influenced by him. The poem is believed to have been completed in the year 1735.

* This expression refers to the miscellaneous literature, not, of course, to the theological or philosophical works written in Latin.

It is in the eight-syllable rhyming measure, and consists of between twelve and thirteen thousand lines. James I. of Scotland, who received his education while retained as a captive in England between the years 1405 and 1420, wrote his principal work, the *King's Quhair*, in praise of the lady who had won his heart and whom he afterwards married, the Lady Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Duke of Somerset. This poem, which is in a hundred and ninety-seven stanzas, divided into six cantos, contains much interesting matter of the autobiographical sort.

Prose Writers:— Mandevile; Chaucer; Wycliffe.

The earliest known work in English prose, the *Travels of Sir John Mandevile*, dates from this period. As before mentioned, the book had been originally written in French, and afterwards translated into Latin. It was probably about the year 1360 that Sir John prepared and published an English version, also for the benefit of his own countrymen. This is a proof that about this time the knowledge of French, even among the educated classes, was ceasing to be essential or universal. Mr. Wright* says of the work: "Professedly a guide to pilgrims to Jerusalem, to which a large portion of the work is devoted, it contains, nevertheless, the description of nearly the whole of Asia, and of some parts of Africa and Europe, and extends to countries which its author visited, and to others which he certainly did not visit." . . . . . "He assures us that he set out from England in 1322, and that he returned home and compiled his book in 1356. . . . . There is no doubt that his book is partly a compilation; . . . . it is evident that he made large use of the previous narrations of Marco Polo and of the Franciscan Oderic." There was, perhaps, no work more popular in

* *Early Travels in Palestine;* Bohn's Series.

England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries than Mandevile's *Travels*.

Chaucer's prose works consist of two of the *Canterbury Tales*,—the *Tale of Melibœus*, and the *Parson's Tale*,—a translation of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*,—the *Astrolabie*, and the *Testament of Love*. The *Tale of Melibœus*, the design of which is to enforce the duty of forgiveness of injuries, is one of those which are supposed to be told by the poet himself. The *Parson's Tale* is a treatise on the sacrament of penance. Both of these are written in fluent intelligible English, and present few other difficulties to the reader but those which the old orthography occasions. In translating Boethius, Chaucer was renewing for the men of his own day the service rendered by Alfred to the Anglo-Saxons. The *Testament of Love* is divided into three parts. It professes to be an imitation of the work of Boethius. In the first part, Love bequeaths instructions to her followers, whereby they may rightly judge of the causes of cross fortune, &c. In the second, "she teacheth the knowledge of one very God, our Creator; as also the state of grace, and the state of glory." Throughout these two parts are scattered allusions, or what seem to be such, to the circumstances under which Chaucer lost his official employment, and was reduced to poverty. The third part is a remarkable discourse on necessity and freewill, in which the doctrine laid down by St. Augustine and expounded by the schoolmen, is eloquently set forth. Of the *Astrolabie* we have already spoken (see page 54).

John Wycliffe, at one time head of Canterbury Hall at Oxford, and afterwards Rector of Lutterworth, completed about the year 1380 a translation from the Vulgate into English of the whole of the Old and New Testaments. The language of this version is extremely rough. Wycliffe also wrote many polemical tracts, against the Roman Court, the wealth of the clergy, against the right of bad men to

hold property, and finally against some of the doctrines then commonly received. A bold earnest tone distinguishes his style; but it is harsh in the extreme; his language is far ruder than that of Chaucer or Mandevile; and, whatever may be thought of the substance of his writings, he cannot be said to have contributed to the progress of our literature, or aided to polish our language.

CHAPTER II.

REVIVAL OF LEARNING.

1450 — 1558.

M. Sismondi, in his admirable work on the literature of the South of Europe, has a passage*, explaining the decline of Italian literature in the fifteenth century, which is so strictly applicable to the corresponding decline of English literature for a hundred and seventy years after Chaucer, that we cannot forbear quoting it:—

"The century which, after the death of Petrarch, had been devoted by the Italians to the study of antiquity, during which literature experienced no advance, and the Italian language seemed to retrograde, was not, however, lost to the powers of imagination. Poetry, on its first revival, had not received sufficient nourishment. The fund of knowledge, of ideas, and of images, which she called to her aid, was too restricted. The three great men of the fourteenth century, whom we first presented to the attention of the reader, had, by the sole force of their genius, attained a degree of erudition, and a sublimity of thought, far beyond the spirit of their age. These qualities were entirely personal; and the rest of the Italian bards, like the Provençal poets, were reduced, by the poverty of their ideas, to have recourse to those continual attempts at wit, and to that mixture of unintelligible ideas and incoherent images, which render the perusal of them so fatiguing. The whole of the fifteenth century was

* Vol. ii. p. 400 (Roscoe).

employed in extending in every direction the knowledge and resources of the friends of the Muses. Antiquity was unveiled to them in all its elevated characters—its severe laws, its energetic virtues, and its beautiful and engaging mythology;—in its subtle and profound philosophy, its overpowering eloquence, and its delightful poetry. Another age was required to knead afresh the clay for the formation of a nobler race. At the close of the century, a divine breath animated the finished statue, and it started into life."

Mutatis mutandis, these eloquent sentences are exactly applicable to the case of English literature. Chaucer's eminence was purely personal; even more so, perhaps, than that of the great Italians, for the countrymen of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, at least possessed a settled and beautiful language, adapted already to nearly all literary purposes; while the tongue of Chaucer was in so rude and unformed a condition that only transcendent genius could make a work expressed through it endurable. The fifteenth century seems to have been an age of active preparation in every country of Europe. Though no great books were produced in it, it witnessed the invention of the art of printing, the effect of which was so to multiply copies of the master-pieces of Greek and Roman genius, to reduce their price, and to enlarge the circle of their readers, as to supply abundantly new materials for thought, and new models of artistic form, and thus pave the way for the great writers of the close of the next century. Printing, invented at Mentz by Gutenberg about the year 1450, was introduced into England by William Caxton in 1474. The zealous patronage of two enlightened noblemen, Lord Worcester and Lord Rivers, greatly aided him in his enterprise. This century was also signalized by the foundation of many schools and colleges, in which the liberal founders desired that the recovered learning of antiquity should be uninterruptedly and effectually cultivated. Eton, the greatest of

the English schools, and King's College at Cambridge, were founded by Henry VI. between 1440 and 1450. Three new universities arose in Scotland—that of St. Andrew's in 1410, of Glasgow in 1450, of Aberdeen in 1494;—all under the express authority of different Popes. Three or four unsuccessful attempts were made in the course of this and the previous century,—the latest in 1496—to establish a university in Dublin. Several colleges were founded at Oxford and Cambridge in the reign of Henry VIII., among which we may specify Christ Church, the largest college at the former university, which, however, was originally planned by the magnificent Wolsey on a far larger scale, and the noble foundation of Trinity College, Cambridge.

In the period now before us our attention will be directed to three subjects;—the poets, whether English or Scotch,—the state and progress of learning,—and the prose writers. The manner in which the great and complex movement of the Reformation influenced for good or evil the development of literature, is too wide a subject to be fully considered here. Something, however, will be said under this head, when we come to sketch the rise of the "new learning," or study of the Humanities in England, and inquire into the causes of its fitful and intermittent growth.

Poetry:—Hawes, Skelton, Surrey, Wyat; first Poet Laureate.

The poets of this period, at least on the English side of the border, were of small account. The middle of the fifteenth century witnessed the expulsion of the English from France; and a time of national humiliation is unfavourable to the production of poetry. If, indeed, humiliation become permanent, and involve subjection to the stranger, the plaintive wailings of the elegiac Muse are naturally evoked; as we see in the instances of Ireland

and Wales. But where a nation is merely disgraced, not crushed, it keeps silence, and waits for a better day. For more than thirty years after the loss of the French provinces, England was distracted and weakened by the civil wars of the Roses. This also was a time unfavourable to poetry, the makers of which then and long afterwards depended on the patronage of the noble and wealthy,—a patronage which, in that time of fierce passions, alternate suffering, and universal disquietude, was not likely to be steadily maintained. Why the fifty years which followed the victory of Bosworth should have been so utterly barren of good poetry, it is less easy to see. All that can be said is, that this was an age of preparation, in which men disentombed and learned to appreciate old treasures, judging that they were much better employed than in attempting to produce new matter, with imperfect means and models. Towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII. were produced the *Songs and Sonnettes* of the friends Lord Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyat; and Sackville wrote the Induction to the *Mirrour for Magistrates* in the last year of Mary.

Scotland seems to have been about a century later than England in arriving at the stage of literary culture which Chaucer and his contemporaries illustrate. Several poets of no mean order arose in that country during the period now in question. Of some of these, namely, Dunbar, Gawain Douglas, Lyndsay, and Henryson, we shall presently have to make particular mention.

Stephen Hawes, groom of the chamber to Henry VII., wrote, among other poems, the *Pastime of Pleasure*, a narrative allegory like the *Romance of the Rose*, the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, and so many other favourite poems of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This work is in the seven-line stanza so much employed by Chaucer. The versification has little of the smoothness and music of the great master; it is rough and untunable, like that of Lydgate. An extract from this work will be found in Percy's

Reliques. Hawes must have died after the year 1509, since we have among his poems a Coronation ode celebrating the accession of Henry VIII. John Skelton, a secular priest, studied at both universities, and had a high reputation for scholarship in the early part of the sixteenth century. It is certain that his Latin verses are much superior to his serious attempts in English. A long rambling elegy in the seven-line stanza on Henry, fourth Earl of Northumberland, murdered in 1489, will be found in Percy. The versification is even worse than that of Hawes. In Skelton's satires there is a naturalness and a humour, which make them still readable. Several of these contained vigorous attacks on Cardinal Wolsey, to escape from whose wrath Skelton had to take sanctuary at Westminster, and afterwards was protected by Bishop Islip till his death in 1529. Alexander Barclay, a monk, first of Ely, afterwards of Canterbury, is known as the translator, with additions, of Sebastian Brandt's German poem of the *Ship of Fools*, a satire upon society in general.

Far above these barbarous rhymers rose the poetic genius of Surrey. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, son of the victor of Flodden, was born about the year 1516. At the age of sixteen he was contracted in marriage to the Lady Frances Vere. His Geraldine, to whom so many of his sonnets are addressed, was a daughter of the Earl of Kildare. She slighted his passion; and the rejected lover carried the fiery ardour of his spirit into the scenes of war and diplomacy. Having committed some errors in the conduct of the campaign in France in 1546, he was thrown into prison by order of the "jealous ruthless tyrant,"* who then sat on the throne, brought to

* Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Canto vi.

> "Thou jealous ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
> On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
> The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
> The gory bridal-bed, the plundered shrine,
> The murdered Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine."

trial on a trumpery charge of high treason, and beheaded in January 1547, a few days before Henry's death. His *Songes and Sonnettes*, together with those of Wyat, were first published in 1557. His translation of the second and fourth books of the Æneid is the earliest specimen of blank verse in the language.

Sir Thomas Wyat the elder, a native of Kent, was much employed by Henry VIII. on diplomatic missions, and over-exertion in one of these occasioned his early death in 1541. The improvement in grace and polish of style which distinguishes Surrey and Wyat in comparison with their predecessors was unquestionably due to Italian influences. The very term "sonnet," by them first introduced, is taken from the Italian "sonetto." Puttenham, in his *Art of Poesie* (1589), says of them, that "having travelled into Italie, and there tasted the sweet and stately measures and style of the Italian poesie, as novises newly crept out of the school of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude and homely manner of vulgar poesie from that it had been before, and for that cause may justly be sayd the first reformers of our English metre and style." He reputes them for "the chief lanternes of light" to all subsequent English poets. "Their conceits were lofty, their style stately, their conveyance cleanly, their termes proper, their metre sweet and well-proportioned: in all imitating very naturally and studiously their master, Francis Petrarch."

John Heywood, called the Epigrammatist, to distinguish him from the dramatist of the same name who flourished in the Elizabethan period, was a favourite at the court both of Henry VIII. and of Mary. He introduced a species of dramatic entertainment, called Interludes, bearing a considerable resemblance to our modern farces. These pieces, as the name implies, were short one-act plays, exhibited between the acts of regular tragedies or comedies. One of the most famous of them is called *The Four Ps*, in

which a Pardoner, a Poticary (or apothecary), a Palmer, and a Pedlar, are brought upon the stage together.

The earliest mention of a poet laureate, *eo nomine*, occurs in the reign of Edward IV., by whom John Kaye was appointed to that office.* We read of a king's versifier (*versificator*) as far back as 1251. The change of title admits of a probable explanation. The solemn crowning of Petrarch on the Capitol, in the year 1341, made a profound sensation through all literary circles in Europe. Chaucer, as we have seen, distinguishes Petrarch as "the *laureat* poete." In the next century we find the dignity of *poeta laureatus* forming one of the recognized degrees at our universities, and conferred upon proof being given by the candidate of proficiency in grammar, rhetoric, and versification. It is impossible not to connect this practice of laureation with the world-famous tribute rendered by the Romans to the genius of Petrarch. After the institution of the degree, it is easy to understand that the king would select his poet among the *poetæ laureati*, and that the modest title of *versificator* would be dropped.

Scottish Poets:—Henryson; Dunbar; Gawain Douglas; Lyndsay.

The present work does not pretend to trace the history of the Scottish poetry; but, in the dearth of genius in England during this period, the rise of several admirable poets in the sister country demands our attention. The earliest of these, Robert Henryson, appears to have died about the end of the fifteenth century. His longest poem, the *Testament of Faire Creseyde*, a sort of supplement to Chaucer's *Troilus and Creseyde*, was printed by Urry in his edition of that poet. The pastoral, called *Robin and Makyne*, is given in Percy's *Reliques*. The pith of the

* Hazlitt's *Johnson's Lives*, article Kaye.

story is exactly that which we find in Burns' *Duncan Gray*, only that in Henryson's poem the parts are reversed; it is the lady who first makes love in vain, and then growing indifferent, is vainly wooed by the shepherd who has repented of his coldness. The *Abbey Walk* is a beautiful poem of reflexion, the moral of which is, the duty and wisdom of submitting humbly to the will of God in all things.

William Dunbar, the greatest of the old Scottish poets, was a native of East Lothian, and born about the middle of the fifteenth century. He studied at the university of St. Andrew's, perhaps also at Oxford. In early life he entered the novitiate of the Franciscan order, but does not appear to have taken the vows. James IV. attached him by many favours to his person and court, where we have certain evidence of his having lived from 1500 to 1513, the date of Flodden. After that fatal day, on which his royal patron perished, his name vanishes from the Scottish records, and it is merely a loose conjecture which assigns his death to about the year 1520.

Dunbar's most perfect poem is the *Thistle and the Rose*, written in 1503 to commemorate the nuptials of James IV. and Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. The metre is the Chaucerian heptastich, or seven-line stanza, invented by Chaucer, and employed by all his successors down to Spenser inclusive. The versification is most musical,—superior to that of any poet before Spenser except Chaucer, and better than much of his. The influence, both direct and indirect, of the father of our poetry, is visible, not in this poem alone, but throughout the works of the school of writers now under consideration. The poet, according to the approved mediæval usage, falls asleep and has a dream, in which May—the "faire frische May" in which Chaucer so delighted,—appears to him, and commands him to attend her into a garden and do homage to the flowers, the birds, and the sun. Nature is then introduced,

and commands that the progress of the spring shall no longer be checked by ungenial weather. Neptune and Æolus give the necessary orders. Then Nature, by her messengers, summons all organized beings before her,—the beasts by the roe, the birds by the swallow, the flowers by the *yarrow*. The Lion is crowned king of the beasts, the Eagle of the birds, and the Thistle of the flowers. The Rose, the type of beauty, is wedded to the Thistle, the type of strength, who is commanded well to cherish and guard his Rose. Such is an outline of the plot of this beautiful and graceful poem.

"The design of the *Golden Terge*"—another allegoric poem—"is to show the gradual and imperceptible influence of love when too far indulged over reason."* This poem is in a curious nine-line stanza, having only two rhymes. But Dunbar excelled also in comic and satirical composition. The *Dance of the Seven deadly Sins* is a production of this kind, the humour, dash, and broad Scotch of which remind one strongly of Burns. The metre is that of Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*. Some Highlanders are introduced at the end, and receive very disrespectful mention:—

"Thae turmagantis with tag and tatter
Full loud in Ersche [Erse] begout to clatter,
And rowp lyk revin and ruke.
The devil sa devit wes with thair yell
That in the deepest pit of hell
He smorit them with smoke."

Gawain Douglas, sprung from a noble family, studied at the university of Paris, and rose to be bishop of Dunkeld. After Flodden field, the regent Albany drove him from Scotland. Coming into England, he was hospitably received by Henry, who allowed him a liberal pension. He died in London of the plague, in 1521. He is chiefly known for a translation of the Æneid into heroic verse,

* Warton

which is the earliest English version on record, having been published in 1513. The prologues prefixed to the several books have great poetic beauty; and the language presents little more difficulty than that of Chaucer. The concluding lines of one of these prologues are subjoined as a specimen; they are part of an address to the sun:—

> "Welcum depaynter of the blomyt medis,
> Welcum the lyffe of everything that spredis,
> Welcum storare * of all kynd bestial,
> Welcum be thy bricht bemes gladand al."

Sir David Lyndsay was a satirist of great power and boldness. He is the Jean de Meun † of the sixteenth century; but, as a layman and a knight, he levels his satire with even greater directness and impartiality than that extraordinary ecclesiastic. In his allegorical satire, entitled *The Dreme*, the poet is conducted by Remembrance, first to the infernal regions, which he finds peopled with churchmen of every grade,—then to Purgatory,—then through the "three elements" to the seven planets in their successive spheres, — then beyond them to the empyrean and the celestial abodes. The poetical topography is without doubt borrowed from Dante. He is then transported back to earth, and visits Paradise; whence, by a "very rapid transition," as Warton calls it, he is taken to Scotland, where he meets "Johne the comounweill," who treats him to a long general satire on the corrupt state of that kingdom. After this the poet is in the usual manner brought back to the cave by the sea side, where he fell asleep, and wakes up from his dream. The metre is the Chaucerian heptastich. There is prefixed to the poem an exhortation in ten stanzas, addressed to King James V., in which advice and warning are conveyed with unceremo-

* Restorer.

† Author of the continuation of the *Roman de la Rose;* the causti cynicism of which is almost incredible.

nious plainness. Among Lyndsay's remaining poems, the most important is the *Monarchie*, an account of the most famous monarchies that have flourished in the world, commencing with the creation of man, and ending with the day of judgment. This poem, which is for the most part in the common romance metre, or eight-syllable couplet, runs over with satire and invective. Lyndsay's powerful attacks on the Scottish clergy, the state of which at that time unfortunately afforded but too much ground for them, are said to have hastened the religious war in Scotland.

The language of all these Scottish writers in their serious compositions closely resembles the English of their contemporaries south of the Tweed; the chief difference consisting in certain dialectic peculiarities, such as the use of "quh" for "wh," and of "it" and "and" for "ed" and "ing," in the terminations of the past and present participles. But in proportion as they resort to comic expression, and attach their satire to particular places or persons, their language becomes less English, and slides into the rough vernacular of their ordinary speech. Exactly the same thing is observable in Burns' poetry.

Learning:—Grocyn, Colet, the Humanities; State of the Universities.

The fifteenth century was, as we have said, pre-eminently an age of accumulation, assimilation, and preparation.

The first two-thirds of the sixteenth century fall under the same general description. England had to bring herself up to the intellectual level of the continent, and to master the treasures of literature and philosophy, which the revival and diffusion of Greek, and partly of Roman learning, had placed within her reach, before her writers could

attempt to rival the fame of the great ancients. There is much interest in tracing in detail the numerous minute steps and individual acts which helped on this process. Many such are related by Wood in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*. Thus we are told that the first man who publicly taught Greek at Oxford was William Grocyn. Stapleton, a Catholic writer of the age of Elizabeth, says, "Recens tunc ex Italiâ venerat Grocinus, qui primus in eâ ætate Græcas literas in Angliam invexerat, Oxoniique publice professus fuerat." Of course Grocyn had to go abroad to get this new learning. Born about 1450, and educated at Oxford, he travelled on the continent about the year 1488, and studied both at Rome and Florence. Greek learning flourished then at Florence more than at any place in Europe, owing to the fact that Lorenzo de Medici had eagerly welcomed to his court many illustrious and learned refugees, who, subsequently to the fall of Constantinople, had been forced to seek shelter from the violence and intolerance of the Mussulmans in Western Europe. One of these learned Byzantines, Demetrius Chalcocondyles, together with the Italian Angelo Politian, afforded to Grocyn by their public instructions those opportunities which he had left his country to search for,—of penetrating into the sanctuary of classical antiquity, and drinking in at the fountain head the inspirations of a national genius, whose glories no lapse of time can obscure. Gibbon,* with his usual fulness of learning and wonderful mastery of style, has thus sketched the features of this eventful time:—

"The genius and education of Lorenzo rendered him not only a patron, but a judge and candidate, in the literary race. In his palace, distress was entitled to relief, and merit to reward; his leisure hours were delightfully spent in the Platonic academy; he encouraged the emula-

* *Decline and Fall*, ch. lxvi.

tion of Demetrius Chalcocondyles and Angelo Politian; and his active missionary, Janus Lascaris, returned from the East with a treasure of two hundred manuscripts, four score of which were as yet unknown in the libraries of Europe. The rest of Italy was animated by a similar spirit, and the progress of the nation repaid the liberality of her princes. The Latins held the exclusive property of their own literature, and these disciples of Greece were soon capable of transmitting and improving the lessons which they had imbibed. After a short succession of foreign teachers, the tide of emigration subsided, but the language of Constantinople was spread beyond the Alps; and the natives of France, Germany, and England imparted to their countrymen the sacred fire which they had kindled in the schools of Florence and Rome." After noticing the spirit of imitation which long prevailed, he continues :—" Genius may anticipate the season of maturity; but in the education of a people, as in that of an individual, memory must be exercised before the powers of reason and fancy can be expanded; nor may the artist hope to equal or surpass, till he has learned to imitate the works of his predecessors."

But to return to Grocyn,whose visit to Florence occasioned this quotation. When settled in Oxford again, about the year 1490, he opened his budget, and taught Greek to all comers. Among his hearers was a youth of much promise from London, known afterwards to his own and later ages as Sir Thomas More. More was further instructed in Greek by a private tutor, Thomas Lynacre, the physician, who had gained his medical degree, as well as his Greek, in Italy. Another active patron of the new learning was Dean Colet, the founder of St. Paul's school, and the friend of Erasmus. He too had travelled extensively, and observed admiringly; he had remarked how Lorenzo de Medici laboured to build up a sort of Utopia of intelligence and refinement, made beautiful by Art, and governed by Wis-

dom ; and it seems that in these rougher northern climates he had some design of reproducing a faint resemblance of the gardens of Bellosguardo. On the lands of his monastery at Sheen, near Richmond, he built himself, long before his death, a magnificent mansion, whither, he said, he designed to retire in his old age, and amid a circle of intellectual friends enjoy the sweets of a philosophical and lettered ease.* This was a Pagan rather than a Christian ideal; it shows how far the contact with the genius of antiquity intoxicated the spirit even of a thoroughly good man ; how disturbing, then, must have been its effects upon men of lower character !

In this age of strange excitement, when a new world, supposed to teem with wealth, had just been discovered in the West, when by the invention of printing thoughts were communicated and their records multiplied with a speed which must then have seemed marvellous, and when the astronomical theory of Copernicus was revolutionizing men's ideas as to the very fundamental relations between the earth and the heavens, unsettling those even whom it did not convince, there was a temporary forgetfulness even on the part of many Christian priests that this life, dignify it as you may, is, after all, a scene of trial not of triumph, and that, if Christianity be true, suffering is on earth a higher state than enjoyment, and poverty in one sense preferable to wealth. The Reformers seized on this weak point then noticeable in many of the clergy, and made out of it, to use a modern phrase, abundant controversial capital. Human learning, they said,—Luther himself originated the cry—was a waste of time as well as a dangerous snare ;—art was a mere pandering to the passions ;—sinful man should be engrossed but by one pursuit, the pursuit of salvation—should study only one book, and that the Bible. When the Protestant party came into

* Flanagan's *Church Hist.* vol. ii. p. 11.

power under Edward VI., this spirit operated with prejudicial effect on the young plants of learning and culture which had begun to spring up at our universities. To take one well-known instance;—the ecclesiastical commissioners of Edward, in their visitation to Oxford, destroyed or removed a valuable collection, impossible to be replaced, of six hundred manuscripts of the classical authors, presented by Humphrey, the good duke of Gloucester, to that University. But when the Catholic hierarchy, acknowledging by their conduct that these censures contained some truth, and noticing also that the disproportionate attachment to the new studies was a frequent cause of unsettlement of faith, changed their tactics in some countries, and, discouraging the study of the Humanities, attempted to revive the old scholastic philosophy, then the charge was immediately reversed. Then the cry was, "You are trying to shut out enlightenment, to set up the barbarous scholastic, in preference to the Ciceronian, Latinity, — you are enemies of progress, of civilization, of the enlargement of the mind."

This point will be illustrated presently. In connexion with the spread of learning in England, the name of Cardinal Wolsey must not be omitted. Shakspeare has described his services in language that cannot be amended:—*

> "This Cardinal,
> Though from an humble stock, undoubtedly
> Was fashioned to much honour from his cradle.
> He was a scholar, and a ripe and good one;
> Exceeding wise, fair spoken, and persuading;
> Lofty and sour to them that loved him not,
> But, to those men that sought him, sweet as summer.
> And though he were unsatisfied in getting,
> (Which was a sin) yet, in bestowing, madam,
> He was most princely. Ever witness for him
> Those twins of learning, which he raised in yon

* *Henry VIII.* Act iv. Scene 2.

Ipswich and Oxford; one of which fell with him,
Unwilling to outlive the good that did it;
The other, though unfinish'd, yet so famous,
So excellent in art, and still so rising,
That Christendom shall ever speak his virtue."

Cambridge soon followed the example of Oxford in introducing the study of Greek. Towards the close of the reign of Henry VIII., Sir John Cheke and Sir Thomas Smith are mentioned in the annals of that university as having been especially active in promoting this study. Milton refers to this in one of his sonnets:—

"Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheke,
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward Greek."

The sense of insecurity induced among all classes by Henry's tyranny in his later years, and the social confusion which prevailed in the following reign, interrupted the peaceful flow of learned studies. The universities appear to have been sunk in a lower depth of inefficiency and ignorance about the year 1550, than ever before or since. Under Mary, Cardinal Pole, the legate, was personally favourable to the new learning. Sir Thomas Pope, the founder of Trinity College, Oxford, consulted him on the framing of the college statutes, in which it was provided that Greek should form one of the subjects of instruction. In his legatine constitutions, passed at a synod held in 1555, Pole ordered that all Archbishops and Bishops, as well as holders of benefices in general, should assign a stated portion of their revenues to the support of cathedral schools in connexion with every metropolitan and cathedral church throughout the kingdom, into which lay scholars of respectable parentage were to be admitted, together with theological students. These cathedral schools were kept up in the following reign, and seem to have attained

considerable importance. But one enlightened and generous mind could not restrain the reactionary violence of the Gardiners and the Bonners. Under their management a system of obscurantism was attempted, if not established, at the universities; the Greek poets and philosophers were to be banished, and scholasticism was to reign once more in the schools. Ascham, in his *Schoolmaster*, thus describes the state of things:

"The love of good learning began suddenly to wax cold; the knowledge of the tongues was manifestly contemned;—yea, I know that heads were cast together, and counsel devised, that Duns, with all the rabble of barbarous questionists, should have dispossessed of their place and room Aristotle, Plato, Tully, and Demosthenes, whom good Mr. Redman, and those two worthy stars of that university, Cheke and Smith, with their scholars, had brought to flourish as notably in Cambridge as ever they did in France and in Italy."

If this account can be trusted, it explains to a considerable extent the rooted persuasion which has always prevailed in England, that the Catholic system is hostile to the progress of learning.

Prose Writers.

Although no prose work produced during this period can be said to hold a place in our standard literature, considerable progress was made in fitting the rough and motley native idiom for the various requirements of prose composition. Among the works that have come down to us, perhaps the most interesting is Sir John Fortescue's treatise on the *Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*. The author was Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench in the time of Henry VI. He was at first a zealous Lancastrian; he fought at Towton, and was taken prisoner at Tewkesbury in 1471, after which he was

attainted. But upon the death of Henry in that year, leaving no son, Fortescue admitted the legality of the claim of the house of York, and thereby obtained the reversal of the attainder. The title of the work mentioned is not very appropriate; it should rather be,—a "Treatise on the best means of raising a revenue for the King, and cementing his power;"—these, at least, are the points prominently handled. The opening chapters, drawing a contrast between the state and character of the English peasantry under the constitutional crown of England, and those of the French peasantry under the absolute monarchy of France, are full of acute remarks and curious information. It is instructive to notice, that Fortescue (ch. xii.) speaks of England's insular position as a source of *weakness*, because it laid her open to attack on every side. The observation reminds us how modern a creation is the powerful British navy, the wooden walls of which have turned that position into our greatest safeguard. This work is in excellent English, and, if freed from the barbarous orthography in which it is disguised, could be read with ease and pleasure at the present day. No other prose writer of the fifteenth century deserves notice, unless we except Caxton, who wrote a continuation of Trevisa's Chronicle to the year 1460, and printed the entire work in 1482.

The effect of the revival of ancient learning was for a long time to induce our ablest literary men to aim at a polished Latin style, rather than endeavour to improve their native tongue. Erasmus wished that Latin should be the common literary language of Europe; he always wrote in it himself, and held what he termed the barbarous jargon of his Dutch father-land in utter detestation. So Leland, More, and Pole, composed, if not all, yet their most important and most carefully-written works in Latin. John Leland, the famous antiquary, to whose *Itinerarium* we owe so much interesting topographical

and sociological information for the period immediately following the destruction of the monasteries, is the author of a number of Latin elegies, in various metres, upon the death of Sir Thomas Wyat the elder, which evince no common elegance and mastery over the language. More's *Utopia*, published in 1516, was composed in Latin, but has been translated by Burnet and others. The idea of the work is evidently taken from Plato's *Commonwealth;* and even the communism of the Greek philosopher is re-produced. "In all other places it is visible, that while people talk of a commonwealth, every man only seeks his own wealth; but [in *Utopia*], where no man has any property, all men zealously pursue the good of the public." More's English writings are—a *History of the Life and Reign of Edward V.*, written about 1513, a collection of Letters, and several controversial tracts in reply to Tyndal and other English reformers.

The regular series of English prose chronicles commences in this period. Robert Fabyan was an alderman and sheriff of London in the reign of Henry VII.; his *Concordance of Storyes*, giving the history of England from the fabulous Brutus to the year 1485, was published after the author's death in 1516. Successive subsequent editions of this work continued the history to 1559. Edward Hall, an under-sheriff of London, wrote in 1542 a chronicle, entitled the *Union of the Two Noble Families of Lancaster and York*, bringing the narrative down to 1532. Richard Grafton, himself the author of two independent chronicles in the reign of Elizabeth, printed in 1548 a new edition of Hall, with a continuation to the end of Henry's reign. A curious biographical work, *Illustrium Majoris Britanniæ Scriptorum Summarium*, was written by John Bale, a reformer, afterwards Bishop of Ossory, in 1548. The accuracy of this writer may be judged of by the fact, that in the article on Chaucer he fixes the date of the poet's death in 1450, and in the list of his works *includes* the

Fall of Princes (which was by Lydgate), and *omits* the *Canterbury Tales.*

Not much of the theological writing of the period possessed more than a passing value. Portions of it are indirectly interesting, as illustrating manners and customs, or as tinged with the peculiar humour of the writer. The sermons of Bishop Latimer, one of the leading reformers, who was burnt at the stake under Mary, possess this two-fold attraction. Thus, in preaching against covetousness, he complains of the great rise in rents and in the price of provisions that had taken place in his time, winding up his recital of grievances with the singular climax,—"I think, verily, that if it thus continue, we shall at length be constrained to pay for a pig a pound." The strange humour of the man breaks out in odd similes—in unexpected applications of homely proverbs—in illustrations of the great by the little, and the little by the great: nor is it, it must be owned, ever restrained by good taste or reverence. Cranmer's works have but small literary value, though most important from the historical point of view. John Bale, already mentioned, Becon, Ridley, Hooper, and Tyndal, all composed theological tracts, chiefly controversial. More, Bishop Fisher, and Pole were the leading writers on the Catholic side. More's English works were printed in two black-letter folio volumes in the year 1557. All except the first two,—a *Life of Picus of Mirandula*, and the unfinished *History of Edward V.* (or of Richard III., as it is called in this edition), which has been already mentioned, are either of a devotional character, or treat of the chief points of religious controversy which were then under debate. His last work (1534)—a *Treatise on the Passion*—remains unfinished; and the editor has appended in a colophon these touching words: "Sir Thomas More wrote no more of this woorke; for when he had written this farre, he was in prison kept so streyght,

that all his bokes and penne and ynke and paper was taken from hym, and sone after was he putte to death."

The close of the period was adorned by the scholarship and refined good sense of Roger Ascham. A native of Yorkshire, he was sent at an early age to Cambridge, and during a lengthened residence there diligently promoted the study of the new learning. In 1544 he wrote and dedicated to Henry VIII. his *Toxophilus*, a treatise on Archery, in which, for military and other reasons, he deprecates the growing disuse of that noble art. His exertions were vain: we hear indeed of the bow as still a formidable weapon at the battle of Pinkie in 1547; but from that date it disappears from our military history. In 1550 Ascham went to Germany as Secretary to Sir Richard Morissine, who was then proceeding as ambassador to the Imperial Court; and in 1553, while at Brussels, he wrote in the form of a letter to a friend in England a curious unfinished tract, in which the character and career of Maurice of Saxony, whose successful enterprise he had witnessed, and of two or three other German princes, are described with much acuteness.

In 1553 he was appointed Latin secretary to Edward VI., and retained the office (the same that Milton held under Cromwell) during the reign of Mary. On the accession of Elizabeth he received the additional appointment of reader in the learned languages to the Queen. Elizabeth used to take lessons from him at a stated hour each day. In 1563 he wrote his *Schoolmaster*, a treatise on education. This work was never finished, and was printed by his widow in 1571. The sense and acuteness of many of his pedagogic suggestions have been much dwelt upon by Johnson. An excellent biography of Ascham may be found in Hartley Coleridge's *Northern Worthies*.

CHAPTER III.

ELIZABETHAN PERIOD.

1558—1625.

This is the golden or Augustan age of English literature. After its brilliant opening under Chaucer, a period of poverty and feebleness had continued for more than a hundred and fifty years. Servile in thought and stiff in expression, it remained unvivified by genius even during the first half of the reign of Elizabeth; and Italy with her Ariosto and Tasso, France with her Marot and Rabelais, Portugal with her Camoens, and even Spain with her Ercilla, appeared to have outstripped England in the race of fame. Hence Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poesie*, written shortly before his death in 1586, after awarding a certain meed of praise to Sackville, Surrey, and Spenser (whose first work had but lately appeared), does not "remember to have seen many more [English poets] that have poetical sinews in them." But after the year 1580 a change became apparent. *England's Helicon*, a poetical miscellany (comprising fugitive pieces composed between 1580 and 1600), to which Sidney, Raleigh, Lodge, and Marlowe contributed, is full of genuine and native beauties. Spenser published the first three books of the *Faery Queen* in 1590; Shakspeare's first play—supposed to have been the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*—appeared about the year 1586; and the *Essays* of Francis Bacon were first published in 1597. Raleigh, the first English historian worthy of the name, published his *History of the World* in 1614, and the first portion of

Hooker's learned work on *Ecclesiastical Polity* appeared in 1597.

The peaceable and firmly settled state of the country under Elizabeth was largely instrumental in the rise of this literary greatness. Under the tyranny of Henry VIII., and again in the short reigns of Edward and Mary, nothing was settled or secure; no calculations for the future could be made with confidence; and those who had not to fear for their lives and property were afraid to express a free opinion, or act an open, independent part. Doubt, suspense, and mutual mistrust, paralysed all spontaneous action. At Elizabeth's accession, the perplexed and intimidated nation was ready to receive any form of Christianity which its government chose to impose upon it, provided it could obtain firm social peace. The government, influenced, not so much by the personal leanings of Elizabeth, as by an instinctive dread of the numerous holders of the church lands, lest, if Catholicity should be permanently established, restitution should eventually become the order of the day,— a feeling which, without doubt, was much aided by the horror which the revolting cruelties of Mary's government had everywhere excited,—decided upon establishing Protestantism. Elizabeth, whose sagacity detected the one paramount political want of the country, concluded in the second year of her reign a rather inglorious peace with France, and devoted all her energies to the work of strengthening the power of her government, passing good laws, and improving the internal administration of the kingdom. The consequences of the durable internal peace thus established were astonishing. Men began to trade, farm, and build with renewed vigour; a great breadth of forest land was reclaimed; travellers went forth to "discover islands far away," and to open new outlets for commerce; wealth, through this multiplied activity, poured into the kingdom; and that general prosperity was the result which led her subjects to invest the

sovereign, under whom all this was done, with a hundred virtues and shining qualities not her own. Of this feeling Shakspeare became the mouthpiece and mirror:

> "She shall be loved and feared; Her own shall bless her;
> Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,
> And hang their heads with sorrow;—Good grows with her;
> *In her days every man shall eat in safety*
> *Under his own vine what he plants, and sing*
> *The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.*"

There is indeed a reverse to the picture. Ireland was devastated in this reign with fire and sword; and the minority in England who adhered to the ancient faith became the victims of an organized system of persecution and plunder. Open a book by Cardinal Allen, and a scene of martyred priests, of harried and plundered laymen, of tortured consciences, of bleeding yet indomitable hearts, will blot out from your view the smiling images of peace and plenty above portrayed. The mass of the people, however, went quietly with the government, and shut their ears against the cries of the oppressed Catholics, whose sufferings they were brought to believe were inflicted on them for their disloyalty, not for their religion. The invented plots, the pre-arranged conspiracies, the suborned perjurers, the frequent torture, all the dark and crooked machinations of the Cecils and Walsinghams, which modern research has unravelled, must have been unknown, or at most vaguely surmised, by the contemporary British public.

Wealth and ease brought leisure in their train; and leisure demanded entertainment, not for the body only, but also for the mind. The people, for amusement's sake, took up the old popular drama, which had come down from the very beginning of the middle ages; and, after a process of gradual transformation and elaboration by inferior hands, developed it, in the mouths of its Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher, into the world-famed

romantic drama of England. As the reading class increased, so did the number of those who strove to minister to its desires; and although the religious convulsions which society had undergone had checked the movement towards a complete and profound appreciation of antiquity, which had been commenced by Colet, More, and Erasmus, in the universities, so that England could not then, nor for centuries afterwards, produce scholars in any way comparable to those of the continent, yet the number of translations which were made of ancient authors proves that there was a general taste for at least a superficial learning, and a very wide diffusion of it. Translation soon led to imitation, and to the projection of new literary works on the purer principles of art disclosed in the classical authors. The epics of Ariosto and Tasso were also translated, the former by Harrington, the latter by Carew and Fairfax; and the fact shows both how eagerly the Italian literature was studied by people of education, and how general must have been the diffusion of an intellectual taste. Spenser doubtless framed his beautiful allegory in emulation of the *Orlando* of Ariosto, and the form and idea of Bacon's *Essays* were probably suggested to him by the *Essays* of Montaigne.

Let us now briefly trace the progress, and describe the principal achievements, in poetry and in prose writing, during the period under consideration.

Poets and Dramatists: — Spenser, Daniel, &c.; Origin of the English Drama; the Dramatic Unities; Marlowe, Shakspeare, &c.

Among the poets of the period Spenser holds the first rank. The appearance of his *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579 was considered by his contemporaries to form an

epoch in English poetry. This poem is a pastoral in twelve eclogues, and was dedicated to his truly noble patron, Sir Philip Sidney. The allegorical narrative poem of the *Faery Queen*, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, was published in 1590 and 1596. The earlier portion of it was written in England before the death of Sidney, who is said to have given to the poet substantial marks of his admiration of the part submitted to him. The later cantos were written on his estate of Kilcolman, in the south of Ireland, granted to him by the Queen out of the forfeited lands of the Earl of Desmond. Of his other compositions the chief are *The Tears of the Muses*, *The Ruins of Time*, *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, and the *Hymns to Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty*.

The poems of Shakspeare all fall within the early part of his life; they were all composed before 1598. Writing in that year, Meres, in the *Wit's Treasury*, says,—"As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous honey-tongued Shakspeare. Witness his 'Venus and Adonis;' his 'Lucrece;' his sugared sonnets among his private friends." These, together with such portions of the *Passionate Pilgrim* and the *Lover's Complaint*, as may have been his genuine composition, constitute the whole of Shakspeare's poems, as distinguished from his plays.

Never was a circle of more richly-gifted spirits congregated in one city than the company of poets and playwrights gathered round the court of London between 1590 and 1610. From Kent came Samuel Chapman, the translator of Homer; from Somersetshire the gentle and high-thoughted Daniel*; Warwickshire sent Michael Drayton, author of the *Poly-Olbion*†," and William Shakspeare;

* Author of the *Musophilus;* the *Civil Wars*, an epic in eight books, &c.

† And of *Nymphidia, or the Court of Fairy*, the *Barons' Wars*, &c.

Raleigh — who shone in poetry as in everything else he attempted — came from Devonshire; London itself was the birthplace of Donne*, Spenser, and Jonson. All these great men, there is reason to believe, were familiarly acquainted, and in constant intercourse with one another; but unhappily the age produced no Boswell; and their table talk, brilliant as it must have been, was lost to posterity. One dim glimpse of one of its phases has been preserved in the well-known passage by Andrew Fuller, writing in 1662:

"Many were the wit combats between him and Ben Jonson. Which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shakspeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention. He died A.D. 1616, and was buried at Stratford-upon-Avon, the town of his nativity."

Among the crowd of minor poets — not one of them without some merit — who graced this extraordinary period, we may single out the name of Southwell. Robert Southwell was a native of Norfolk, and was sent by his zealous parents to be educated at the English college of Douay. Becoming a Jesuit, he returned to England as a missionary in 1584, and continued for eight years to labour in that capacity. In 1592 he was arrested and thrown into prison, where he remained three years. There existed not the slightest ground for supposing that he was connected with any political movement; nevertheless, he was condemned in 1595, and was hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn. His well-known lines,

* Author of *Songs and Sonnets, Satires, Epistles, Epithalmia*, &c.

Time goes by Turns, are to be found in nearly every collection of British poetry.

What we have to say on the development of the drama in this period may best be prefaced by a brief sketch of its rise and progress in the middle ages. The first dramas of any kind of which we hear in England were written in French, and composed by the clergy. They were called miracle plays or mysteries, because the subjects were taken from Holy Scripture, or from the lives of the saints. We hear of a play of this kind on the story of St. Catherine, as having been acted at Dunstable in the year 1119. The names of other mysteries are, *The Fall of Man, The Death of Abel, Noah's Flood, Lazarus*, and *Pilate's Wife's Dream*. The object of the clergy in sanctioning these plays clearly was — first, to bring home the mysteries of the faith to the heart and imagination of the mass of the people, to whom, as they could not read, these dramatic representations partially supplied the place of books; secondly, to gratify, in an innocent and salutary manner, that love of recreation and amusement which is inherent in our nature. Celebrations of a similar kind are to this day regularly enacted among the Indians in Mexico on the great festivals.

As works of art, these miracle plays were rude and ill arranged; gradually they were, from the artistic point of view, improved upon. They were succeeded by "the morals, or moral plays, in which not a history, but an apologue, was represented, and in which the characters were all allegorical. The moral plays are traced back to the early part of the reign of Henry VI., and they appear to have gradually arisen out of the miracle plays, in which, of course, characters very nearly approaching in their nature to the impersonated vices and virtues of the new species of drama must have occasionally appeared. The Devil of the Miracles, for instance, would very naturally suggest the Vice of the Morals. . . . . Nor did

the moral plays altogether put down the miracle plays; in many of the provincial towns, at least, the latter continued to be represented almost to as late a date as the former. Finally, by a process of natural transition, very similar to that by which the sacred and supernatural characters of the religious drama had been converted into the allegorical personifications of the moral plays, these last, gradually becoming less and less vague and shadowy, at length, about the middle of the sixteenth century, boldly assumed life and reality, giving birth to the first examples of regular tragedy and comedy." *

This process of transition, however, was not effected wholly by slow change from within; on the contrary, it was hastened and largely modified by important external influences. The revival of ancient learning had made men familiar with the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and the tragedies of Seneca; and in Italy, where the modern drama originated, the first plays were comedies after the manner of Plautus. Two such comedies by Ariosto were acted about the year 1512. The earliest known English play, the *Ralph Roister Doister* of Nicholas Udall, one of the masters of Eton school, is expressly said to have been modelled upon the comedies of Plautus and Terence. The exact date of this play is uncertain; but it is known that it could not have been composed after the year 1551. It is in the Alexandrine rhyming metre, and, though the language is rough, is a work of considerable vigour. The earliest known tragedy, *Gorboduc*, otherwise entitled *Ferrex and Porrex*, was acted before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall, in January, 1562. Its joint authorship is ascribed to Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, and Thomas Norton, a Puritan clergyman. Blank verse appears in this drama for the first time, and is handled by its authors in a more free and masterly

* Craik's *Sketches of the History of English Literature*, vol. iii. p. 17.

manner than it had been by Surrey, its first introducer. The subject of *Gorboduc*, like that of *King Lear*, is taken from the fabulous British annals of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the choice illustrates the intense fondness with which the English people, in the fervid temper of nationality which distinguished it in the sixteenth century, reverted to the events — real or supposititious — of its by-gone history. For it must be remembered that the veracity of Geoffrey, and the reality of King Brutus and his successors, were not suspected or impeached until the time of Milton.

Sir Philip Sidney, in his *Defence of Poesy*, while praising *Gorboduc* for its "stately speeches and well-sounding phrases," censures it for its neglect of the dramatic unities. This, therefore, is the place to explain what those unities were, and how our early tragedians came to violate them.

Aristotle, in his *Treatise on Poetry*, collects from the practice of the Greek dramatists certain rules of art, as necessary to be observed, in order that any tragedy may have its full effect upon the audience. The chief of these relates to the action represented, which, he says, must be *one*, *complete*, and *important*. This rule has been called the Unity of Action. He also says that tragedy "for the most part endeavours to conclude itself within one revolution of the sun, or nearly so." This rule, limiting the time during which the action represented takes place to twenty-four hours, or thereabouts, has been called the Unity of Time. A third rule, not expressly mentioned by Aristotle, but nearly always observed by the Greek tragedians, requires that the entire action should be transacted in the same locality; this is called the Unity of Place. These three rules were carefully observed by the first Italian tragedians, Rucellai and Trissino; and also in France, when the drama took root there. In Spain and in England they were ne-

glected, and apparently for the same reason,— that both peoples were fervently national, and intensely self-conscious; and, therefore, in order to gratify them, the drama tended to assume the historic form — a form which necessitates the violation of the unities. *Gorboduc* is full of political allusions and illustrations of the present by the past; — the personages in it are never tired of expatiating on the blessings of peace and a settled government, — on the wickedness and folly of popular risings, and the evils of a doubtful succession. But to carry out these didactic aims not one action, but several, had to be dramatized, and these actions could not, of course, happen at the same time, nor in the same place. Marlowe, in his historical tragedy of *Edward II.*, and Shakspeare, in his ten historical plays, proceed upon this principle. Shakspeare, however, when he wrote to gratify his own taste rather than that of the public, so far showed his recognition of the soundness of the old classical rules, that in the best of his tragedies he carefully observed the unity of action, although he judged it expedient, perhaps with reference partly to the coarser perceptions of his audience, to sacrifice those lesser congruities of place and time which the sensitive Athenian taste demanded, to the requirements of a wider, though looser, conception of the ends of dramatic art.

Christopher Marlowe, whose irregular life came to a premature and shameful close*, holds the highest place among English dramatists before Shakspeare. Yet his genius was as irregular, and almost as unsatisfactory, as his life. His *Tragedy of Doctor Faustus* observes no rules, and is full of absurdity, foulness, and inconsistency. Only two or three passages in it which are beautiful as poetry, the most remarkable being the closing scene before Faustus is carried off by the demons, have hitherto

* He was killed in a tavern scuffle at the age of thirty-one.

rescued it from oblivion. The fondness of the English for plots taken from the national history we have already noticed. In this play of Marlowe, we see another, and less creditable, popular taste catered for,— the proneness to dabble in magic and conjuring. Queen Elizabeth herself was a believer in magic, and patronised the celebrated conjuror, John Dee, the English Paracelsus.

William Shakspeare, the pride of English literature, and of all literature, quitted, before he was yet twenty, his native town of Stratford-upon-Avon, and, like many a young author since, threw himself into the varied world of London. He was already married to Ann Hathaway, a woman of his own rank, but seven years older than himself. We know next to nothing of his actual manner of life, either before or after this decisive step; but it seems probable that his fellow-townsman, Richard Burbage, who was an actor in London at the time when Shakspeare arrived there, induced him to adopt the theatre as a vocation. The names of both appear on a certificate addressed to the Privy Council in 1589 by the sharers in the Blackfriars Theatre. The signatures are sixteen in number, and Shakspeare's stands twelfth on the list; a position which seems to prove, both that he had prospered in the world, to be the part-owner of a theatre at all, and also that his share in the concern was as yet but that of a junior partner, recently admitted to the theatrical firm. It should be observed that all these sixteen persons were actors, — "Her Majesty's poor players," as they style themselves, — and that Shakspeare also wrote plays, thus combining three characters, which in modern times are usually separated. It was as if Lumley, Kemble, and Sheridan, were rolled into one. In the fourteen years between 1584 and 1598, Shakspeare had produced, if the passage in Meres' *Wit's Treasury* may be trusted, at least thirteen plays (assuming *Titus Andronicus*, which is among those mentioned by Meres, to be really his), out of

which six were comedies, and five, histories. *Hamlet*, in its original shape, appeared in 1603; *King Lear* in 1608; *Macbeth* and *Othello*, at whatever time they may have been written, were not published till after the author's death. The three Roman plays, *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*, are supposed by Mr. Knight, with much apparent probability, to have been written at Stratford, after Shakspeare's retirement from the stage. This retirement is conjectured by Mr. Knight to have taken place some seven or eight years before the poet's death. By that time Shakspeare had certainly amassed a considerable fortune; for we find him making investments at various periods (extending over four years) in land, houses, and other property, at Stratford. Like Sir Walter Scott, he seems to have set before him, as the chief object of his ambition, to raise his name and family into importance in his native town, and to have kept this personal aim constantly in view, while writing works which will command to the remotest time the admiration of mankind. Shakspeare's will is dated March 25th, 1616; and in less than a month afterwards, on his birth-day, the 23rd of April, he died. Of the special cause or circumstances of his death, nothing is known with certainty. Mr. Ward, the vicar of Stratford, writing forty-six years after the event, says, — "Shakspeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson, had a merry meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakspeare died of a fever there contracted." The vicar's surmise — the words "it seems" show that it was no more — is uncharitable, and need not be adopted; but no other trace of evidence has been met with on the subject.

Shakspeare's plays are divided into three classes — Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. Of the first class it may be said, so immeasurably do they soar above anything in the shape of comedy which had been produced before, — that they are Shakspeare's creation, and that

English comedy begins with him. The classical models which the author of *Ralph Roister Doister* so much affects, are, except in one instance, quite thrown aside by Shakspeare. A careful examination of the Italian comedy of the sixteenth century would probably show that Shakspeare was indebted to it, more than to any other external source, for the spirit and mode of treatment of his comedies. It is to be observed that the plots of six * out of his fourteen comedies are Italian, while only one — that of the *Comedy of Errors*, altered from the *Menœchmi* of Plautus, — is classical. Of the remaining seven comedies, the plots of two — *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and *As You Like It*, are from mediæval sources; that of *Love's Labour Lost* is apparently French; that of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is Spanish; that of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* is native English; while that of the *Winter's Tale* (if not invented by Greene, on whose story of *Pandosto* it is founded) and that of the *Tempest*, are of unknown origin. Of the plots of Shakspeare's eleven tragedies, two (*Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*) are Italian; four (*Timon of Athens* and the three Roman plays) classical; two (*Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*) mediæval; and three (*Cymbeline*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*) are taken from the national history. Under this last description fall, of course, the plots of Shakspeare's ten Histories, in which he does but follow in the track of the writers of *Gorboduc*, and many other "Chronicle-histories." From this analysis it appears that all the antecedent elements of literature which have heretofore passed under review, except the ecclesiastical, furnished materials to the "myriad-minded" Shakspeare. The legends of the British bards, derived through Geoffrey and Holinshed, are represented in *Cymbeline* and *Lear;* the vigorous but

* *Taming of the Shrew* (at least in part), *Merchant of Venice*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*.

irregular conceptions of the mediæval poets and romancers in *Midsummer-Night's Dream* and *Troilus;* the modern Italian literature in the *Merchant of Venice,* and many others — the recent revival of ancient learning in the Roman plays, — lastly, the intense nationality of the period, and its historical studies, are represented in the noble series of dramas illustrative of England's story.

Of the other dramatists of this Elizabethan period the chief were Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger. Jonson was in early youth a soldier, and served in the Low Countries; but after the campaign was over he went upon the stage. His passionate and overbearing temper constantly led him into quarrels, in one of which he had the misfortune to kill his antagonist, a brother-actor. For this he was imprisoned. Among his fellow-prisoners was a Catholic priest, intimacy with whom resulted in Jonson's conversion. He remained a Catholic — nominally, at least — for twelve years, and then returned to the established religion. He was a favourite with King James, who made him poet laureate. In 1619 he visited the poet Drummond at his seat at Hawthornden, in Scotland; and we have a curious account by Drummond of his conversation and behaviour during the visit. Jonson died in 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey; upon his tombstone were inscribed these words only, "O rare Ben Jonson." Of his extant plays ten are comedies, three comical satires, only two, besides a fragment of a third, tragedies, and about thirty-five, masques, or other court entertainments, — short pieces, in which, as to a yet greater extent in the modern opera, the words were of less importance than the music, decoration, dumb show, and other theatrical accessories. Beaumont and Fletcher have left us about fifty-two plays, of which fourteen are certainly by Fletcher; the remainder may be the joint production of the two. Of these, twenty-three are comedies, eighteen

tragi-comedies, and nine tragedies. Of the plays of Philip Massinger seventeen are preserved; five tragedies, eight comedies, and four tragi-comedies. A tragi-comedy, as explained by Fletcher himself*, is a play which ends happily, yet in the course of which some of the principal personages are brought so near to destruction that the true tragic interest is excited. It is evident, therefore, that several of Shakspeare's comedies, such as the *Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure*, would, according to the nomenclature of Fletcher, be classed as tragi-comedies.

Prose Writing: — Novels; Essays; Pamphlets; Criticism.

The prose literature of this period is not less abundant and various than the poetry. We meet now with novelists, pamphleteers, and essayists for the first time. Lodge wrote several novels, from one of which Shakspeare took the plot of *As You Like It.* Lyly published his *Euphues* in 1578; and the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney appeared after the author's death in 1590. This tedious pastoral romance is the fruit of the revival of letters, and of the influence of Italian literature. It was evidently suggested by the *Arcadia* of Sanazzaro, a Neapolitan poet, who died in the year 1530. Now, too, the literature of travel and adventure, which began with old Sir John Mandevile, and has attained to such vast proportions among us in modern times, was placed on a broad and solid pedestal of recorded fact by the work of Richard Hakluyt, a Herefordshire man, who in 1589 published a collection of voyages made by Englishmen "at any time," (as he states on the title page) "within the compass of these fifteen hundred years." Purchas' *Pilgrim* (1625) is another collection of the same kind.

* See the passage in Craik, vol. iii. p. 201.

The genius of Montaigne raised up English imitators of his famous work, one of whom was afterwards to eclipse his original. Francis Bacon published a small volume, entitled *Essayes, Religious Meditations, Places of Perswasion and Disswasion*, in 1597. These were again published, with large additions, in 1612; and again, similarly augmented, in 1625, under the title of *Essayes, or Counsels Civill and Moral.* In the dedication to this last edition Lord Bacon writes, — "I do now publish my *Essayes;* which of all my other workes have beene most currant; for that, as it seemes, they come home to men's businesse and bosomes. I have enlarged them both in number and weight, so that they are indeed a new work." The *Essays* in this their final shape were immediately translated into French, Italian, and Latin.

A singular work, difficult of classification, but which is more a collection of miscellaneous essays and detached thoughts than anything else, — the influence of Montaigne being plainly discernible throughout, — is Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, published in 1621. Burton was an Oxford man, and his volumes, as Mr. Hallam remarks, may be described as a great sweeping of miscellaneous literature from the Bodleian library.

Among the political writings of this period there is none more remarkable than Spenser's *View of the State of Ireland*, which, though written and presented to Elizabeth about the year 1596, was not published till 1633. This work was the fruit of the poet's long sojourn in Ireland, first as secretary to the lord-deputy, Lord Grey of Wilton, then in various other employments. It is the best political treatise that we have met with since the essay of the astute old lawyer, Sir John Fortescue. The pamphlets of the period are innumerable, and touch upon every conceivable public question. Those by Martin Mar-prelate, the assumed name of a Puritan author, who endeavoured in a clumsy way to turn the Anglican

episcopacy into ridicule, and the witty replies to them by Nash, are perhaps the most memorable.

The deeper culture of the time displayed itself in the earliest attempts in our language at literary and æsthetic criticism. George Gascoyne, the poet, led the way with a short tract, entitled *Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Rhyme in English:* this appeared in 1575. But among all such works, Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*, written about 1584, stands pre-eminent. Chaucer's diction was antiquated; Surrey and Wyat were refined versifiers rather than poets; the sun of Spenser had but just risen; and, as people are apt to hold cheap that in which they do not excel, it seems that the English literary public at this time were disposed to regard poetry as a frivolous and useless exercise of the mind, unworthy to engage the attention of those who could betake themselves to philosophy or history. A work embodying these opinions, entitled *The School of Abuse*, was written by Stephen Gosson in 1579, and dedicated to Sidney; and it seems not improbable that this work was the immediate occasion which called forth the *Defence of Poesy*. In this really noble and beautiful treatise, which moreover has the merit of being very short, Sir Philip seeks to recall his countrymen to a better mind, and vindicates the pre-eminence of the poet as a seer, a thinker, and a maker.

It has been discovered* that from this period dates the first regular newspaper, though it did not as yet contain domestic intelligence. "The first news-pamphlet which came out at regular intervals appears to have been that entitled *The News of the Present Week*, edited by Nathaniel Butler, which was started in 1622, in the early days of the Thirty Years' War, and was continued in conformity with its title as a weekly publication."

* Craik, vol. iv. p. 97.

Historians:—Holinshed; Bacon; Raleigh; Knolles.

Turning from these miscellaneous productions, let us see what was achieved during this period in the historical field.

The task of writing the national history fell into the hands of a series of plodding chroniclers (Grafton, Holinshed, Stow, and Speed) who translated, compiled, or abridged the old Latin histories, adding for the later periods matter collected by their own researches, in respect of which they are to be considered as original and valuable authorities. The authors mentioned wrote between the years 1548 and 1614. Holinshed will long be remembered as the source whence Shakspeare drew the materials of many of his plays. He, in common with all our historians down to Milton, accepted as authentic the fabulous British history of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and translated the greater part of it. It was thus that Shakspeare became acquainted with the stories of *Lear* and *Cymbeline*. The plot of *Macbeth*, and those of most of the historical plays, were in like manner derived from Holinshed; the other authorities being Hall's *Chronicle*, Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey*, and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.

Lord Bacon published in 1622 a *History of the Reign of Henry VII.* His motive for choosing that particular reign was, if the somewhat fulsome dedication to Prince Charles may be trusted, "to do honour to the last king of England, that was ancestor to the king your father and yourself,"—Henry VII. having been the father of Margaret, wife of James IV. of Scotland, and great-grandmother to James I.

The poet Daniel published in 1618 a *History of England*, commencing at the Conquest and ending with the reign of Edward III. The *Annals* of the reign of Eliza-

beth, by Camden, appeared in 1615. The famous descriptive work by the same author, entitled *Britannia*, appeared in its completed form in 1607. To this work, which was written in Latin, we are indebted for a vast amount of exact topographical and antiquarian information, throwing light on the physical and social condition of the country, which is nowhere else to be met with.

Sir Walter Raleigh employed the years during which he lay in the prison to which the pusillanimous James had consigned him, in subservience to the dictation of Spain, in compiling, with the help of other scholars, a *History of the World*, from the creation to the fall of the Macedonian kingdom, B.C. 168. A remarkable extract from this history will be found in the second part of the present work; upon reference to which the reader will see how large a space the Turkish monarchy then engrossed in the politics of Europe, and will be prepared to find one of the most competent of English writers, early in the seventeenth century — Richard Knolles — taking for his subject the history of the Turks. For more than a hundred years after the fall of Constantinople (1453), the Turkish power continued to extend itself, until it threatened to absorb all the Sclavonic provinces of Eastern Europe. The victory of Lepanto in 1570 did indeed effectually arrest this progress; but the Turk still continued to be a formidable power, and was only reduced to the present helpless condition in which we see him by the victories of Prince Eugene in the early part of the eighteenth century.

Theology: Puritan Writers:—Hooker; Donne; Allen; Parsons.

The theological literature of the period arose, for the most part, out of the long campaign, offensive and defen-

sive, carried on by the divines of the Church of England, as then recently established by act of parliament, against the Puritans. The latter were members of the establishment; for Protestant non-conformity had as yet no regular existence,— but they laboured incessantly to obtain a further "reform" of the new church in the direction taken by Calvin in his celebrated experiment at Geneva, in which city many of their leaders had found an asylum during the Marian persecution. The kneeling attitude at the communion-table, the sign of the cross used in baptism, the white surplice, which bore a suspicious resemblance to the ancient alb, the ambiguous language of the liturgy, the organ music, the temporal power, above all, possessed by the bishops, — these and many more peculiarities, which either policy had retained, or inconsistency had overlooked, seemed to the Puritans to be intolerable abominations, the retention of which involved a national sin of the deepest dye. Cartwright, Travers, and Prynne were the chief writers of the party. Against them the Archbishops Parker, Whitgift, and Bancroft, though their ordinary arguments were the more forcible ones of deprivation, fine, and imprisonment, did not disdain to defend in writing also the cause of Anglicanism. But their most formidable opponent was Richard Hooker. This distinguished man, born near Exeter, and educated at Oxford, — a student profoundly learned, of ascetic habits and blameless life,— held successively the livings of Boscom, in Wiltshire, and Bishopsbourne, in Kent. In 1594 he published the first part of his *Book of Ecclesiastical Polity.* The object of the work is to justify the ceremonies and ordinances of the Church of England against the charges of superstition and contrariety to Scripture with which the Puritans aspersed them; and further, to show that the "godly discipline" of Presbyterianism insisted on by the party, though it might be *a* lawful form of church government, was not prescribed in Scripture as *the* only allowable form. The whole question is argued with great earnestness and

carefulness of argument and fulness of detail. Indeed, it was but just that it should be so; since the ultimatum addressed to the Puritans was not, as in these days of toleration,—"Be convinced, or else separate from us, and form a church of your own;" but,—"Be convinced, or else coerced; since we will neither accept your discipline ourselves nor allow you to establish it independently." A work intended to reconcile men's minds to such an alternative had need to be carefully calculated to produce conviction. That the Puritans themselves had no larger idea of toleration was proved by the persecution which they directed against the Quakers and others in New England, and also by the exterminating haste with which they abolished the Church of England, root and branch, as soon as the course of the civil war left them free to do so.

In the reign of James, Dr. Donne and Bishop Andrewes were the chief writers of the Episcopalian party. The reaction against the encroaching self-asserting spirit of Puritanism, joined to the perception that the controversy with the Catholics could not be carried on upon the narrow Puritan grounds, nor without reference to the past history of the Church, led back about this time the ablest and best men among the Anglican divines to the study of the primitive ages, and to research among the treasures of patristic lore. Donne, Andrewes, and Laud, as afterwards Bull, Pearson, Taylor, and Barrow, were deeply read in ecclesiastical literature. James I. prided himself on his theological profundity. His *Basilicon Doron,* or advice to his son Prince Henry, published in 1599, contains far more of theological argument than of moral counsel. His *Apology for the Oath of Allegiance,* written in 1605, to justify the imposition upon English Catholics of the new oaths framed after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, drew forth an answer from Bellarmine.

Among the persecuted Catholics, the chief writers during this period were Cardinal Allen, and the Jesuit fathers, Parsons and Campion. Allen's eventful and laborious life throws a strong light on the condition of the English Catholics during the reign of Elizabeth. A native of Lancashire, he received his education at Oriel College, Oxford, and in the reign of Mary was appointed proctor of the University, and also canon of York. He boldly and vehemently resisted the change which ensued upon the accession of Elizabeth, and was soon therefore obliged to leave Oxford, and take refuge in the Netherlands. Returning secretly to England, he endeavoured to exercise his functions as a priest; but after three years of constant peril, in which he assumed various disguises, shifted from place to place, and had several hairbreadth escapes, he retired again to the continent. The ancient institutions, founded by the Church in the middle ages for the education of the clergy, having been all diverted to the use of the establishment, Allen conceived the idea of founding an English college or seminary in the Spanish Netherlands; and about the year 1562 he organized the English college at Douay. Suppressed by Requesens, the Spanish governor, at the instigation of the English government, in 1578, the college was transferred by Allen to Rheims, where he presided over it for ten years, until in 1588 it was removed back to Douay. He died in 1594.

Allen's writings—which deal with the intricate questions that lie in the border-land between theology and politics — have rather a historical than a theological interest. His *Apology or Defence of the Jesuits and Seminarists*, written in 1582, was intended as a reply to the government proclamations, in which the Catholic clergy were held up as traitors. Parsons, a voluminous and able writer, entered into the controversy both on the doctrinal and on the practical side.

Of the noble Edmund Campion, who suffered in 1581,

we possess (besides a history of Ireland) only a few sermons and pamphlets.

Philosophy: — Lord Bacon.

The public teaching of philosophy at the universities differed little during this period from that which had prevailed before the change of religion. The ethics, logic, and physics of Aristotle were still taught at Oxford and Cambridge. Hobbes, of whom we shall have occasion to say more hereafter, tells us in his short autobiography that he spent most of his time at Oxford in studying the philosophy and logic of Aristotle, and that when he went to the continent soon after, and exhibited his attainments, he found himself only laughed at for his pains. The grand development of ethical philosophy, which in Spain was worked out about this time by Soto, Suarez, and Victoria, and which has been practically illustrated — to take one striking instance — in the treatment of the negro race by the Spaniards, differing as it does so advantageously from the general behaviour of the Teutonic nations, could not, as being closely connected with Catholicity, find a counterpart in England. The new logical system of the Frenchman, Peter Ramus, though much talked of and much commended in England, does not appear to have in the slightest degree superseded that of Aristotle in the schools.* Physics and astronomy, which, in the hands of Kepler, Galileo, Grassi, &c. were making towards the close of this period

* Ramus seems to have deserved the strong terms of censure which Bacon uses of him, and to have been, in fact, little better than a charlatan. He ridiculed the syllogistic process on account of its cumbrousness and alleged inutility, and proposed to substitute a logic of common sense, such as good reasoners actually made use of in argument. As if Aristotle meant that every one must argue in syllogisms, and not merely to analyse the nature and form of intellectual conviction.

such astonishing progress abroad, were not cultivated in England with any striking success until after the Restoration.* Yet in the history of philosophy this is the period of distinction for England above all others, for in it she produced the man who founded the new logic, the new method of investigating the truth of nature and of history, — Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam.

Bacon was born on the 22nd January, 1561, at his father's house in the Strand, London. Sir Nicholas Bacon was keeper of the Great Seal, and one of Elizabeth's most trusted and valuable councillors, having been retained in office for twenty years up to the time of his death in 1579. Francis, the second son, was sent at a very early age to Trinity College, Cambridge, but left it at the age of sixteen, without having taken a degree. Even while at the University he is said to have been disgusted with the dry Aristotelianism, which was the only philosophical food that the place afforded, and to have dreamed of a renovation and re-classification of the sciences. Being a younger son, he derived no benefit from the family estates of Gorhambury and Redgrave, and therefore commenced to study law at Gray's Inn. Through his brother's influence he was returned to the House of Commons, but failed to make that step the instrument of his advancement, as he had anticipated. In his embarrassment he found a generous friend in the Earl of Essex, who bestowed upon him his domain of Twickenham. In this pleasant retreat, now consecrated to the memory of Pope, he composed his Essays. Under James I. he rapidly rose in his profession, until in 1618 he was raised to the peerage and appointed Lord Chancellor. Three years afterwards he was impeached by the

* In the department of pure mathematics, however, Napier, the inventor of logarithms, and his coadjutor or corrector, Briggs, fall within this period. The method of logarithms was first published at Edinburgh in 1614.

Parliament, and found guilty of having received presents from suitors in his court. He resigned the seals, and spent the remainder of his life in retirement at Gorhambury, where he died in 1627.

With regard to the Baconian philosophy, we shall here only attempt something like a circumstantial description of the works containing it. These are three in number,—the treatise on the *Advancement of Learning*, the *Instauratio Magna*, and the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*. The first was composed in English, and first published in 1605. Its general object was to exhibit a survey of the whole field of human knowledge, showing its actual state in its various departments, and noting what parts had been cultivated, what were lying waste, without, however, entering upon the difficult inquiry as to *erroneous methods* of cultivation; his purpose in this work being only "to note omissions and deficiencies," with a view to their being made good by the labours of the learned.

The *Instauratio Magna*, which, though in a most unfinished state, owing to the pressure of his public and active duties upon the writer, is the most important repository of the Baconian philosophy, appeared in 1620. It was written in Latin, dedicated to King James, and divided into six parts. Of five of these Bacon has given us little more than outline sketches, or tables of contents. The first part, *Partitiones Scientiarum*, was to be a general ground-plan of existing knowledge, noticing and sometimes supplying deficiencies. This is wanting, but its place is partly supplied by the *De Augmentis*. The second part, the *Novum Organum*, the logic of the new inductive philosophy, is described by its author as "the science of a better and more perfect use of reason in the investigation of things, and of the true aids of the understanding." This part we have, though not executed to the full extent of the design. The third part, *Historia Naturalis*, was to be a description of

universal nature. To this Bacon has contributed nothing but his *Centuries of Natural History*, containing about one thousand observed facts and experiments. He reckons up one hundred and thirty particular histories which ought to be written for this work. Of the fourth part, *Scala Intellectus*, we have only a few introductory pages, which show that the design of this part was to illustrate the actual course of scientific inquiry, to trace the steps by which the mind proceeded in analytic investigation. The fifth part is termed *Prodromi sive Anticipationes Philosophiæ Secundæ*. Of this we have a few fragments, headed Cogitata et Visa, Filum Labyrinthi, &c. The sixth part was to be the *Philosophia Secunda* itself. "To perfect this last part," he says, "is above our powers and beyond our hopes. We may, as we trust, make no despicable beginnings; the destinies of the human race must complete it, — in such a manner, perhaps, as men, looking only at the present, would not readily conceive."

The *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, which appeared in 1623, is an enlarged and revised version in Latin — about one-third being new matter — of the treatise on the *Advancement of Learning*.

CHAPTER IV.

CIVIL WAR PERIOD.

1625—1700.

The literature of this period will be better understood after a brief explanation has been given of the political changes which attended the fall, restoration, and ultimate expulsion of the Stuart dynasty.

The Puritan party, whose proceedings and opinions in the two preceding reigns have been already noticed, continued to grow in importance, and demanded, with increasing loudness, a reform in the Church establishment. They were met at first by a bigotry at least equal, and a power superior, to their own. Archbishop Laud, who presided in the High Commission Court *, had taken for his motto the word "thorough," and had persuaded himself that only by a system of severity could conformity to the established religion be enforced. Those who wrote against, or even impugned in conversation, the doctrine, discipline, or government of the Church of England, were brought before the High Commission Court, and heavily fined; and a repetition of the offence, particularly if any expressions were used out of which a seditious meaning could be extracted, frequently led to an indictment of the offender in the Star Chamber † (in which also Laud had a seat), and to his imprisonment

* Established by Queen Elizabeth to try ecclesiastical offences.

† Established by Henry VII. in 1487.

and mutilation by order of that iniquitous tribunal. Thus Prynne a lawyer, Bastwick a physician, and Burton a clergyman, after having run the gauntlet of the High Commission Court, and been there sentenced to suspension from the practice of their professions, fined, imprisoned, and excommunicated, were in 1632 summoned before the Star Chamber, and sentenced to stand in the pillory, to lose their ears, and be imprisoned for life. In 1633 Leighton, father of the eminent Archbishop Leighton, was by the same court sentenced to be publicly whipped, to lose both ears, to have his nostrils slit, to be branded on both cheeks, and imprisoned for life. In all these cases the offence was of the same kind;—the publication of some book or tract, generally couched, it must be admitted, in scurrilous and inflammatory language, assailing the government of the Church by bishops, or the Church liturgy and ceremonies, or some of the common popular amusements, such as dancing and playgoing, to which these fanatics imputed most of the vice which corrupted society.

To these ecclesiastical grievances Charles I. took care to add political. By his levies of ship-money, and of tonnage and poundage,—by his stretches of the prerogative,—by his long delay in convoking the parliament,—and many other illegal or irritating proceedings,— he estranged from him all the leading politicians,—the Pims, Hampdens, Seldens, and Hydes,—just as, by supporting Laud, he estranged the commercial and burgher classes, among whom Puritanism had its stronghold. In November, 1640, the famous long parliament met; the quarrel became too envenomed to be composed otherwise than by recourse to arms; and in 1642 the civil war broke out. In the following year, London being completely in the power of the parliament, the Puritans were able to gratify their old grudge against the playwriters by closing all the theatres. Gradually the

conduct of the war passed out of the hands of the more numerous section of the Puritan party — the Presbyterians — into those of a section hitherto obscure — the Independents — who were supported by the genius of Milton and Cromwell. This sect originally bore the name of *Brownists*, from their founder, Robert Browne (1549—1630): they went beyond the moderate Puritans in regarding conformity to the establishment as a sin, and therefore forming, in defiance of the law, separate congregations. But their later writers, such as Milton and Owen, compensated for this indomitable sectarianism by maintaining the doctrine of toleration; against the Presbyterians they argued that the civil magistrate had no right to force the consciences of individuals. They took care, indeed, to make one exception: the Catholic worship was by no means to be tolerated. "As for what you mention about liberty of conscience," said Cromwell to the delegates from Ross, "I meddle not with any man's conscience. But if by liberty of conscience you mean a liberty to exercise the mass, I judge it best to use plain dealing, and to let you know, where the parliament of England have power, that will not be permitted." * Still it was a great thing to have the principle once boldly asserted and partially applied; for Catholics as well as others were sure to benefit sooner or later from its extension.

In the civil war, the clergy, four-fifths of the aristocracy and landed gentry, with the rural population depending on them, and some few cities, adhered to the king. The Catholics joined him to a man. The poets, wits, and artists, between whom and Puritanism a kind of natural enmity subsisted, sought, with few exceptions, the royal camp, where they were probably more noisy than serviceable. On the other hand, the parliament

* See Carlyle's *Letters and Speeches of Cromwell.*

was supported by the great middle class, and by the yeomen or small landed proprietors. It had at first but one poet (Wither was then a Royalist), but that one was John Milton.

The king's cause became hopeless after the defeat of Naseby in 1645; and after a lengthened imprisonment he was brought to the block by the army and the Independents, ostensibly as a traitor and malefactor against his people; really, because while he lived, the revolutionary leaders could never feel secure. There is a significant query in one of Cromwell's letters, written in 1648, "whether 'Salus populi summa lex,' be not a sound maxim."

But before the fatal window in Whitehall the reaction in the public sentiment and conscience commenced. Cromwell, indeed, carried on the government with consummate ability and vigour; but after all he represented only his own stern genius, and the victorious army which he had created; and when he died—and in the rivalries of his generals the power of that army was neutralised — England, by a kind of irresistible gravitation, returned to that position of defined and prescriptive freedom which had been elaborated during the long course of the middle ages.

At the Restoration (1660), the courtiers, wits, and poets returned from exile, not uninfluenced, whether for good or evil, by their long sojourn abroad; the Anglican clergy saw their church established on a firmer footing than ever; and their Puritan adversaries, ejected and silenced, passed below the surface of society, and secretly organized the earlier varieties of that many-headed British dissent which now numbers half the people of England among its adherents. The theatres were re-opened; and every loyal subject — to prove himself no Puritan — tried to be as wild, reckless, and dissolute as possible. Yet in the course of years the defeated party, with changed

tactics indeed, and in a sober mood, began to make itself felt. Instead of asking for a theocracy, they now agitated for toleration; and, renouncing their republicanism as impracticable, they took up the watchword of constitutional reform. The Puritans and Roundheads of the civil war reappear towards the close of Charles II.'s reign under the more permanent appellation of *the Whig party.*

One of the points in which the party was found least altered after its transformation was its bitter and traditional hostility to Catholicism. Hence, after it became known that the heir-presumptive to the crown, James Duke of York, had become a Catholic, the Whigs formed the design of excluding him on that ground from the throne, and placing the crown upon the head of the next Protestant heir. The party of the Court and the cavaliers, (who began about this time to be called Tories) vigorously opposed the scheme, and with success. James II. succeeded in 1685, and immediately began to take measures for the relief of Catholics from the many disabilities under which they laboured.

Here we may take a hasty view of the history of Catholicism in England since 1625. Charles I., who had married a French princess, and was attached to that Anglican school which approached the nearest to Rome, was personally inclined to screen the oppressed Catholics from persecution; when he did sacrifice them, it was merely to save himself, or to escape the odious imputation of favouring them. Accordingly, it does not appear that more than twenty-one priests (regular and secular) were put to death for their religion during this reign.* Among them were Father Arrowsmith, and Barlow the Benedictine. Owing to the comparative connivance which it received, Catholicity made progress, and made many

* Flanagan's *Church History*, vol. ii. pp. 311—334.

converts. Milton alludes to this in the *Lycidas**, written in 1637. Their loyalty to the king of course brought down upon the whole body the persecuting fury of the Parliament. Two-thirds of the estates of all Papists were sequestered; new oaths were invented to entangle and ruin them; and old penal laws were carried into vigorous execution. Cromwell carried on the same system. Under Charles II., though the laws were not altered, they were seldom rigorously enforced until the time of the so-called Popish plot of 1680. Twenty-three Catholics were then put to death, because the English people were smitten with a panic, and fear made it cruel. Of these, six were laymen, including the venerable Lord Stafford, eight were Jesuits, and eight secular priests. The last and noblest victim was Oliver Plunket, Archbishop of Armagh.

James pursued his object with all the indiscretion and unfairness habitual to his family. Though the Whigs had been defeated and cowed,— though the great majority of the nation desired to be loyal,—though the Anglican clergy in particular had committed themselves irrevocably to the position that a king ought to be obeyed, no matter to what lengths he might go in tyranny,— he so managed matters as almost to compel the divines to eat their own words, and, by forfeiting the affection and confidence of the people, to throw the game into the hands of the Whigs. The revolution came; James II. was expelled; the Act of Settlement was passed; and the Catholics of England again became an obscure and persecuted minority, which for a hundred years almost disappears from the public gaze and from the page of history.

Under William III., from 1688 to 1700, there was a lull, comparatively speaking, in political affairs. The Toleration Act, passed in 1689, amounted to a formal renunciation of the claim of the State — on account of which

* "Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said."

so much blood had been shed in this and the previous century—to impose religious uniformity upon its subjects. Catholics were indeed excepted from its operation; but the habit of thought which the Act was significative of and tended to produce, was certain in the end to demand the rectification of this inconsistency. Towards the middle of William's reign the Tories began to recover from the stunning effects of the moral shock which they had sustained at the Revolution; and the modern system of parliamentary government, though complicated for a time by the question of Jacobitism, began to develop its outlines out of the strife of the opposing parties.

Having thus reviewed the course of events, we proceed to describe the development of ideas, as expressed in literature, during the same period.

Poetry:—The Fantastic School; Cowley, Crashaw, &c.; Milton; Dryden; Butler.

The Court still, as in the days of Elizabeth, opened its gates gladly to the poets and play-wrights. Jonson's chief literary employment during his later years was the composition of masques for the entertainment of the king and royal family. That quarrelsome, reckless, intemperate man, whose pedantry must have been insufferable to his contemporaries had it not been relieved by such flashes of wit, such a flow of graceful simple feeling, outlived by many years the friends of his youth, and died, almost an old man, in 1637. His beautiful pastoral drama of the *Sad Shepherd* was left unfinished at his death.

The younger race of poets belonged nearly all to what has been termed by Dryden and Johnson the Metaphysical school, the founder of which in England was Donne. But in fact this style of writing was of Italian parentage, and

was brought in by the Neapolitan Marini.* Tired of the endless imitations of the ancients, which, except when a great genius like that of Tasso broke through all conventional rules, had ever since the revival of learning fettered the poetic taste of Italy, Marini resolved to launch out boldly in a new career of invention, and to give to the world whatever his keen wit and lively fancy might prompt to him. He is described by Sismondi† as "the celebrated innovator on classic Italian taste, who first seduced the poets of the seventeenth century into that laboured and affected style which his own richness and vivacity of imagination were so well calculated to recommend. The most whimsical comparisons, pompous and overwrought descriptions, with a species of poetical punning and research, were soon esteemed, under his authority, as beauties of the very first order." Marini resided for some years in France, and it was in that country that he produced his *Adone*. His influence upon French poetry was as great as upon Italian, but the vigour and freedom which it communicated were perhaps more than counterbalanced by the glaring bad taste which it encouraged. The same may be said of his influence upon our own poets. Milton alone had too much originality and inherent force to be carried away in the stream; but the most popular poets of the day,—Donne, Cowley, Crashaw, Waller, Cleveland, and even Dryden in his earlier efforts — gave in to the prevailing fashion, and, instead of simple, natural images, studded their poems with *conceits* (concetti). This explains why Cowley was rated by his contemporaries as the greatest poet of his day, since every age has its favourite fashions, in literature as in costume; and those who conform to them receive more praise than those who assert their indepen-

* Born 1569, died 1625; author of the *Adone* and the *Sospetto di Herode*.

† *Literature of the South of Europe* (Roscoe), vol. ii. p. 262.

dence. Thus Clarendon* speaks of Cowley as having "made a flight beyond all men." A few specimens will, however, better illustrate the Metaphysical, or, as we should prefer to term it, the Fantastic school, than pages of explanation. The first is from Donne's metrical epistles: describing a sea-voyage, he says:—

> "There note they the ship's sicknesses,—the mast
> Shaked with an ague, and the hold and waist
> With a salt dropsy clogged;"

Cleveland compares the stopping of a fountain to a change in the devolution of an estate:

> "As an obstructed fountain's head
> Cuts the entail off from the streams,
> And brooks are disinherited;
> Honour and beauty are mere dreams,
> Since Charles and Mary lost their beams."

Cowley talks of a trembling sky and a startled sun: in the *Davideis*, Envy thus addresses Lucifer:—

> "Do thou but threat, loud storms shall make reply,
> And thunder echo to the *trembling* sky;
> Whilst raging seas swell to so bold a height,
> As shall the fire's proud element affright.
> Th' old drudging sun, from his long-beaten way,
> Shall at thy voice *start*, and misguide the day," &c.

Dryden, in his youthful elegy on Lord Hastings, who died of the small-pox, describes that malady under various figures:—

> "Blisters with pride swelled, which through 's flesh did sprout
> Like rose-buds, stuck in the lily-skin about.
> Each little pimple had a tear in it,
> To wail the fault its rising did commit.

To such a pitch of extravagance did talented men proceed in their endeavour to write in the fashion, in their straining after the much-admired *conceits!*

* *Autobiography*, vol. i. p. 30.

Of Donne, who died in 1631, we have already spoken.* The other poets just mentioned of the Fantastic school, namely Cowley, Crashaw, Waller, and Cleveland, together with Thomas Carew, Robert Herrick, Sir John Suckling, Richard Lovelace, George Herbert, Sir John Denham, and Francis Quarles, were all ardent royalists. Cowley, like Horace driven from Athens,—

"Dura sed emovere loco me tempora grato,"

was dislodged from both Universities, in turn, by the victorious arms of the Parliament, and, attaching himself to the suite of Henrietta Maria, was employed by her at Paris for many years as a confidential secretary. After his return to England in 1656, he published his entire poems, consisting of *Miscellanies*, *Anacreontics*, *Pindaric Odes*, the *Mistress*, and the *Davideis*. The *Pindaric Odes*, written in irregular metres, and abounding in daring flights, some of which were happy strokes of wit, others extravagant instances of bad taste, were probably suggested by the odes of Chiabrera.† The *Mistress* is a collection of love-poems, in which fancy much predominates over feeling. The *Davideis* is an unfinished epic in four books, written while Cowley was at Cambridge. The choice of a sacred subject is not unlikely to have been suggested by the then popular epic of Dubartas‡ on the Creation.

Richard Crashaw was, like Cowley, ejected from the University of Cambridge by the Puritans, and deprived of his fellowship. He became a Catholic, and, after suffering great hardships from poverty at Paris, was discovered and generously aided by his friend Cowley. He died at Loretto in 1650, and was mourned by Cowley in one of the most moving and beautiful elegies ever written. Besides writing many miscellaneous pieces, he

* See pp. 88 and 103. † Born 1552, died 1637.
‡ Born 1544, died 1590.

translated the *Sospetto di Herode* of Marini. The unequal texture of his poetry, and his predilection for conceits, have in his case also greatly dimmed a poetical reputation, which force of thought and depth of feeling might otherwise have rendered a very high one.

Waller, Carew, Herrick, Suckling, and Lovelace, may be described as song-writers rather than as poets. Waller was considered by his contemporaries and immediate successors as having been eminently instrumental in improving the language and rhythm of poetry. Dryden calls him "the father of our English numbers; had he not written, none of us could write." Although this has been disputed, it is probable that Dryden did not speak at random; and that Waller, who was a man of great shrewdness and knowledge of the world, early learned to emancipate himself from the prevailing affectation and pedantry, and to speak in his poems the same simple direct language which was current in good society. This is also true of much of Carew's poetry, but he wrote so little that his influence upon style cannot be compared to Waller's. Milton always lived the life of a retired student, and, even in his latest works, writes like one; his barbarous Latinisms will be noticed in a future chapter. It is therefore quite intelligible that, while exercising great influence on thought, he should have exercised less influence on style than a man like Waller. Dryden himself, however, is the grand point of transition from Elizabethan to modern English.

Some of the songs of this period seem to be destined to, and may be held to deserve, as enduring a fame as those of Béranger. Such are Waller's "Go, lovely rose," Carew's "He that loves a rosy cheek," Lovelace's song "To Althea, from prison," Wither's "Shall I, wasting in despair," and many more. Never before or since has English life so blossomed into song. Scotland has since had her Burns, and Ireland her Moore, but to find the

English *chanson* in perfection we must go back to the seventeenth century.

Only three poets took the Puritan side; but quality made up for quantity. John Milton was born in London in the year 1608. At sixteen he was sent to Cambridge, where he speedily gave proofs of an astonishing vigour and versatility of intellect by the Latin and English compositions, chiefly the former, which he produced in his college years. In spite of the precedents given by the great Italian poets, Latin was still regarded as the universal and most perfect language, not only for prose, but for poetry; and the most gifted poets of the time, Milton and Cowley, followed the example of Vida and Sanazzaro and tried their "'prentice hand" upon hexameters and elegiacs. In these exercises, whatever Dr. Johnson* may say, Milton was singularly successful. So far from his Latin poems being inferior to those of Cowley, it may be doubted whether he does not surpass even Vida; for if the latter excels him in elegance and smoothness, yet in the rush of images and ideas, in idiomatic strength and variety, in everything, in short, that constitutes originality, he is not to be compared to Milton. The elegy upon Bishop Andrewes is really a marvel, considering that it was the work of a lad of seventeen.

Milton, however, was a true lover of his native language, and in his Latin pieces he was but, as it were, preluding and trying his poetic gift, the full power of which was to be displayed in the forms of his own mother tongue. But he would write simple, unaffected English, and be the slave to no fashionable style; whatever mannerism he was afterwards to give way to, was to be the offspring of his own studies and peculiar mode of thought. He expresses this determination in a Vaca-

* In his *Life of Milton*, Johnson writes with an evident bias of dislike, which sometimes makes him unfair. His Tory prejudices would not allow him to be just to the poet who had defended regicide.

tion exercise, composed in 1627. Apostrophizing his native language, he says: —

> "But haste thee straight to do me once a pleasure,
> And from thy wardrobe bring thy chiefest treasure;
> *Not those new-fangled toys, and trimming sleight,*
> *Which takes our late fantastics with delight;*
> But call those richest robes, and gay'st attire,
> Which deepest spirits and choicest wits desire."

The English language obeyed the invitation, and two years later appeared the beautiful *Ode to the Nativity*. In 1634 he wrote the masque of *Comus*. All the rest of the shorter poems (except the Sonnets and two or three Latin pieces) were in like manner composed before the breaking out of the civil war. In 1638 Milton visited Italy, and stayed several months at Florence, Rome, and Naples, mixing familiarly in the literary society of those cities. The Italians were amazed at this prodigy of genius from the remote North, the beauty and grace of whose person recommended his intellectual gifts. The Marquis Manso, the friend of Tasso, said, referring to the well-known anecdote of Pope Gregory, that if his religion were as good as his other qualifications, he would be, "non Anglus verum Angelus." Selvaggi, in a Latin distich, anticipated the famous encomium of Dryden*, and Salsilli declared that the banks of the Thames had produced a greater poet than those of the Mincio. With Galileo he had an interview at Florence. "There was it that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition." † The news of the increasing civil dissensions at home recalled him to England; and after his return he renounced the Muse, and flung himself with characteristic energy into the thickest of the strife. The Puritans, who as a class possessed little learning, were at that time hard pushed by Bishop Hall,

* "Three poets, in three distant ages born," &c. † Areopagitica.

Usher, and other Episcopalian disputants; when Milton appeared in their ranks, and threw not only the force and fire of his genius, but his varied and copious learning, on the yielding side. *Of Reformation in England* (1641), *An Apology for Smectymnuus* (1642), the *Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty* (1641), these are the titles of some of his principal contributions to this controversy. Barren as was the strife, so far as regards any theoretical results directly established by it, yet whoever wishes to understand and feel the greatness of Milton, must not fail to study these treatises. His prose was no "cool element;" most often it sparkles and scathes like liquid metal, yet softens here and there, and spreads out into calmer, milder passages, stamped with an inexpressible poetic loveliness. For many years, in this portion of his life, Milton gave himself up to political and religious controversy; all but one of his prose works were composed between 1640 and the Restoration.

Writing of the sonnet, Wordsworth finely says, that in Milton's hand, —

> "The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
> Soul-animating strains, alas! too few."

Some of these stirring sonnets were composed during the war. That addressed to Cromwell was written before the battle of Worcester, in 1651, but corrected after it, as appears from an inspection of the original MS. in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, in which the ninth line originally stood thus, —

> "And twenty battles more. Yet much remains," &c.

But the pen has been drawn through the first four words, and over them is written "And Worcester's laureat wreath;" and thus the line stands in all the printed editions.

After the king's execution, Milton entered the service of the republican government as Latin secretary, with the duty of conducting the official correspondence with foreign powers. He retained this office under the Protectorate. At the Restoration an order was given for his prosecution, but ultimately he was allowed to retire unharmed into private life. At this time he was totally blind, having lost his eyesight, —

> "over-plied
> In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
> Wherewith all Europe rings from side to side:"

where he refers to his *Defensio Populi Anglicani*, written in 1651 in reply to Salmasius. After his retirement, he lived at Bunhill Fields, in the outskirts of London, and took up again the cherished literary ambition of his youth, which had been to write a great poem, founded either upon the national mythology, or on some scriptural subject. There are several allusions to this early bias of his mind in the prose works. Thus, in the *Animadversions, &c.*, published in 1641, he writes: "And he that now for haste snatches up a plain ungarnished present as a thank-offering to Thee, may then, perhaps, take up a harp and sing Thee an elaborate song to generations." Also, in the *Reason of Church Government, &c.*, published in the same year, after mentioning the encouragement and praise which the Italian literati had given to his early efforts in verse, "I began," he says, "thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might, perhaps, leave something so written to after times as they should not willingly let it die." The whole context of this passage is of great interest for the light it throws on Milton's early conviction of the true

nature of the task to which his extraordinary powers constituted his vocation.

The *Paradise Lost* was first published in 1667. Although the author — from what cause is unknown — obtained a very scanty remuneration * from the publisher, the common supposition, that the sale of the work was extremely slow, is erroneous. Within two years from the date of publication thirteen hundred copies had been sold, and the second edition was exhausted before 1678. But the name of Milton was too hateful in royalist ears to allow of his admirers giving public expression to their feelings under the Stuarts. Addison's papers in the *Spectator* first made the *Paradise Lost* known to a large number of readers, and established it as a household book and an English classic.

The *Paradise Regained*, in four books, and the sacred drama of *Samson Agonistes*, were both published in 1670. Milton died in 1674, and was buried in the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

George Wither, the second Puritan poet, was a native of Hampshire, and sold his paternal property to raise a troop of horse for the Parliament. The diction of his earlier poems, particularly his beautiful songs, shows little trace of the influence of the Fantastic school; but his religious poetry is full of quaintnesses and conceits. The third poet, Andrew Marvell, who was assistant to Milton for eighteen months in the office of Latin secretary, and represented the borough of Hull in Parliament after the Restoration, was at heart a thorough republican. He was a formidable political satirist, both in prose and verse, on the Whig-Puritan side, during the reign of Charles II. His miscellaneous poems, few in number, but natural and often graceful, were published by his widow in 1681.

* Fifteen pounds for the first two editions, numbering three thousand copies.

The poetry of Milton belongs, according to its spirit, to the period before the Restoration, although much of it was actually composed later. The poets whom we have now to consider belong, both in time and in spirit, to the post-Restoration, or re-actionary school. The greatest of them — Dryden — is by far the most prominent figure in the literary history of the latter part of the seventeenth century; and in describing his career, it will be easy to introduce such mention of his less-gifted rivals and contemporaries as our limits will permit us to make.

Dryden was the grandson of a Northamptonshire baronet and squire, Sir Erasmus Dryden, of Canons Ashby; but his relations on both sides had adopted Puritan opinions, and he grew up to manhood under Puritan influences. From Westminster school he proceeded, in 1650, to Trinity College, Cambridge. The seven years of his college life are almost a blank in his history. Of Milton we know exactly, from his own pen, how he was employed at the corresponding period; and can form to ourselves a tolerably accurate notion of the earnest ascetic student, with his rapt look and beautiful features, walking in the cloisters or garden of Christ's College. But of Dryden, the only fact of any importance that we know is, that his favourite study at this time was history, not poetry. He had begun, indeed, to string rhymes together many years before, his elegy on Lord Hastings having been written in 1649; but that feeble and artificial production must have given so little satisfaction, either to himself or others, that we cannot wonder at his having desisted from writing poetry altogether. How unlike Pope, who —

> "Lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

In 1657 he came up to London, probably at the invitation of his kinsman, Sir Gilbert Pickering, who stood high in the favour of Cromwell, being, according to Shadwell,

"Noll's Lord Chamberlain." Dryden seems to have acted as secretary or amanuensis to Sir Gilbert for about two years. Upon the death of Cromwell, in September, 1658, he wrote an elegy, in thirty-six stanzas, commemorating the exploits and great qualities of the Lord Protector. It is written in a manly strain, nor is the eulogy undiscerning. For example, —

> "For from all tempers he could service draw;
> The worth of each, with its alloy, he knew;
> And as the confidant of Nature, saw
> How she complexions did divide and brew,"—

lines which well describe Cromwell's keen discernment of character. At the Restoration, the cavaliers of course came into power, and the Puritan holders of office were ousted. Among the rest, Sir Gilbert Pickering had to retire into private life, happy to be let off so easily; and Dryden's regular occupation was gone. At the age of twenty-eight he was thrown entirely on his own resources. Exactly twenty-eight years later the same mischance befel him; and on each occasion the largeness and vigour of his intellect enabled him to make head against the spite of fortune. Literature was to be his resource; the strong impulse of nature urged him with irresistible force to think and to write. But no kind of writing offered the chance of an immediate return, in the shape of temporal maintenance, except the dramatic. To the drama, therefore, Dryden turned, and began to write plays. Between 1662 and 1694 he produced twenty-six plays, of which twelve were tragedies, three tragi-comedies, nine comedies, and two operas. Perhaps his fame would have suffered but little if he had not written one. Many of them are crammed full — all are more or less tainted —with licentious language and gross allusion; and even in the finest of the tragedies, one misses altogether that deep pathos which forms the inexhaustible charm of

Othello or of Œdipus Tyrannus, and which Dryden had not *heart* enough to communicate to his work.

In 1670 Dryden was appointed poet-laureate, in succession to Sir William Davenant, with a salary of £200. a year, raised towards the end of Charles II.'s reign to £300. During the ten following years he was almost exclusively engaged in writing either plays, or critical essays on dramatic subjects. His acknowledged superiority among men of letters, and the dread of his satire, caused him to be both envied and hated; passions which in those turbulent times did not trust to the pen alone for their gratification. Dryden received the same sort of castigation which Pope narrowly escaped, and which Voltaire met with, at the hands of the Duc de Rohan. The clever, profligate Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, who wished to be considered an arbiter of literary taste, had set up by turns three dramatists — Settle, Crowne, and Otway, — as rivals to Dryden. But, finding that the judgment of the public remained intractable, he attacked Dryden himself in an imitation of Horace, published in 1678. The poet replied vigorously in the preface to *All for Love*. Next year appeared Sheffield's *Essay on Satire*, in which Rochester was severely handled. Supposing Dryden to be the author, Rochester had him waylaid, one evening near Covent Garden, on his return home from Wills's coffee-house, and severely beaten by a couple of hired bullies. In reference to which mishap, Lord Sheffield wrote the following stupid and conceited couplet,—

> "Though praised and punished for another's rhymes,
> His own deserve as much applause *sometimes*."

In the thick of the excitement about the Popish Plot, Dryden, by producing his play of the *Spanish Friar*, and thus pandering to the blind frenzy of the hour, placed himself almost in a position of antagonism to the Court,

since the Whig promoters of the Plot were as little acceptable to Charles as to his brother. But he soon after made ample amends by writing *Absalom and Achitophel*, the most perfect and powerful satire in our language, — in which the schemes of the Whig-Puritan party, and the characters of its leading men, are exposed and caricatured.

In 1682 appeared the *Medal*, another satire on the Whigs, and a few months later the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, of which only about two hundred lines, including the portraits of Settle and Shadwell, are by Dryden, the rest being the work of an inferior poet, named Nahum Tate, — one of those jackals that hunt with the lions of literature, — but bearing marks of considerable revision by the master's hand. The *Religio Laici*, published in the same year, will be spoken of presently.

In February 1685, Charles II. died. Dryden, as in duty bound, mourned the sad event in the *Threnodia Augustalis*, a long rambling elegy, in which occur a few fine lines, but which must be set down on the whole as mendacious, frigid, and profane. Lamentation is not the key-note of the poem; — after bewailing the deprivation of so much virtue and benevolence which the world had sustained in the death of Charles II., the poet turns with alacrity to celebrate with an Io Pæan the accession of the illustrious James.

We are now come to the period of his life at which Dryden changed his religion. Upon this much-debated subject, the reader is referred to the candid examination of the entire question, which will be found in Sir Walter Scott's life of the poet. Scott's theory is, that on the one hand the inner workings of the poet's mind, as inferred from his writings, at last consistently brought him to embrace the Catholic system; on the other hand, that there were many external incidents and circumstances

in his position, which, in a proportion impossible to be exactly ascertained, co-operated with those internal movements to produce the final result. With regard to the first point, he quotes the poet's own confession in the *Hind and Panther:* —

> "My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires;
> My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,
> Followed false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,
> My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
> Such was I; such by nature still I am;
> Be Thine the glory, and be mine the shame!"

The "false lights" evidently refer to the Puritan opinions in which Dryden had been bred up, and the "sparkles" struck out by his pride as clearly point to the religious speculations, originating in his own mind, some of which are disclosed in the *Religio Laici.* This poem, one of the few of Dryden's which were neither written professionally, nor dedicated to, or suggested by, a patron, betokens a mind dissatisfied with the religion in which it had been brought up, and groping its way among clashing systems, in vain endeavours after light. To one whose opinions were so unfixed, who lived, too, at the time when the great Bossuet was analysing the *Variations of the Protestant Churches,* and the virtues of Fénélon were the talk of Europe, it is easy to see that when the time came at which it was his manifest interest to consider the claims of the religion of the Court, the arguments in favour of Catholicism would present themselves with more than ordinary force, because they would not find the ordinary obstacles pre-existing in his mind. The whole subject cannot be better summed up than in the words of Scott: "While pointing out circumstances of proof that Dryden's conversion was not made by manner of bargain and sale, but proceeded upon a sincere" (he adds, "though erroneous") "conviction, it cannot be denied that his situation as poet-laureate, and his

expectations from the king, must have conduced to his taking his final resolution. All I mean to infer from the above statement is, that his interest and internal conviction led him to the same conclusion."

In 1687, some months after his conversion, Dryden published the *Hind and Panther*, a controversial allegory in heroic metre in three books, the Roman Church being represented by the Hind, and the Church of England by the Panther. Great was the clamour raised against him, and many were the answers that appeared, among which the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, the joint production of Prior and Charles Montague (afterwards Earl of Halifax) was the most successful. At the Revolution, Dryden was dismissed from his offices of poet laureate and royal historiographer, and had the mortification of seeing Shadwell, the dramatist, who had been repeatedly the butt of his ridicule,—Shadwell, the hero of *Mac-Flecknoe* and the Og of *Absalom and Achitophel*,—promoted to the laurel. For the remainder of his life Dryden was more or less harassed by the ills of poverty, but his genius shone out brighter as the end drew near. *Alexander's Feast*, which has been often pronounced to be the finest lyric in the language, was written in 1697; the translation of Virgil appeared in the same year; and the *Fables*, which are translations from Ovid and Boccaccio, and modernizations of Chaucer, were published in March, 1700, only a few weeks before the poet's death.

Dryden's manner of life was essentially that of a man of letters. He had no taste for field sports, and did not delight in rural solitudes; nor, though he keenly watched the conflicts of parties and the development of political questions, did he ever mix personally in the turmoil of public life. Though not reserved, he was diffident and shy, and was far from cutting that brilliant figure in fashionable society which Pope, though self-educated and a *parvenu*, succeeded in doing. He rose early, spent

all the fore part of the day in his own study reading or writing; then about three o'clock betook himself to Wills's coffee-house, the common resort of a crowd of wits, pamphleteers, poets, and critics. There, seated in his own arm-chair, which was moved near the window in summer and to the fireside in winter, "glorious John" drank his bottle of port, and ruled the roast, the undoubted chief of the English literary republic.

The only other poets in this post-restoration period whom it is necessary to mention, are, Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, author of the *Essay on Translated Verse*, and Butler, the author of *Hudibras*. Both Dryden and Pope praised Roscommon*,—the former in some fine lines (written on the publication of the *Essay* in 1680), the sense of which was rather closely followed by Pope in his *Essay on Criticism*. In both panegyrics the merit of Roscommon is described to be, that he restored in Britain the authority of "wit's fundamental laws," and superseded Shakspeare's wild beauties and Milton's ruggedness by

* Dryden writes, after mentioning the Italian poets,—

"The French pursued their steps; and Britain, last,
In manly sweetness all the rest surpassed.
The wit of Greece, the majesty of Rome,
Appear exalted in the British loom:
The Muses' empire is restored again,
In Charles's reign, and by Roscommon's pen."

And Pope,—

"But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despised,
And kept unconquer'd and uncivilised;
Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,
We still defied the Romans, as of old:
Yet some there were among the sounder few,
Of those who less presumed, and better knew,
Who durst assert the juster, ancient cause,
And here restored wit's fundamental laws.
* * * * *
Such was Roscommon, not more learn'd than good,
With manners generous as his noble blood;
To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
And every author's merit but his own."

establishing the reign of classic elegance, polish, and correctness. In short, Roscommon, although his achievements in these respects were much overrated by his eulogizers, was a kind of forerunner of Pope, and a writer of the classical school.

Samuel Butler, the son of a Worcestershire farmer, lived for some years in early life in the house of Sir Samuel Luke, one of Cromwell's commanders, who furnished him with the original of *Hudibras*. While staying here he composed his famous satire. After the Restoration little is known with certainty about his manner of life. It is certain, however, that he was befriended by Buckingham, and by Dryden's patron, the Earl of Dorset, and also that he passed all the latter part of his life in extreme poverty. The king, though he was extremely fond of *Hudibras*, and used constantly to quote from it, suffered the author to starve with his usual selfishness and ingratitude. This famous poem, which is in substance a satire on Puritans and Puritanism, may also be regarded as a burlesque on romances, the influence of *Don Quixote* being apparent; and even as in a partial sense a parody on the *Faery Queen*, the titles to the cantos being clearly imitated from those of Spenser. The political importance of the poem was great. It turned the laugh against those terrible Puritans, a handful of whom had so long held the nation down, and defeated them more effectually than cannon-balls or arguments could have done: —

"Ridiculum acri
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res."

Heroic Plays: — Comedy of Manners — Jeremy Collier.

The position of the English drama after the Restoration may be explained in a few words. The theatres

had been closed ever since the Puritan party had gained the mastery in London, that is, since the year 1643. At the Restoration they were re-opened as a matter of course: the king during his long foreign sojourn had become used to and fond of theatrical entertainments; the courtiers ostentatiously shared in the royal taste; and the long-silenced wits were only too glad of a favourable opportunity for displaying their powers. Two theatres were licensed: one, which was under the direct patronage of Charles, was called the King's; the other, which was patronised by his brother, was known as the Duke's, theatre. Dryden, who, as has been mentioned, took to writing plays at this time for a livelihood, attached himself to the former. The taste of the king was for the French school in tragedy, and the Spanish school in comedy; and the influence of both is perceptible in Dryden's plays for many years. He could not, indeed, adopt the French heroic metre—the Alexandrine—for which our language is eminently unsuited; but, retaining the ten-syllable verse of the Elizabethan dramatists, he followed Corneille and Racan in forming it into rhyming couplets. In the plot and manner of his early pieces the Spanish taste conspicuously prevails. The high-flown sentiment, the daring enterprise, the romantic adventure, of the days of chivalry, still hold their ground in them,—still please a society which the modern critical spirit had as yet but partially invaded. These heroic plays of Dryden's are rightly described by Scott as "metrical romances in the form of dramas." A brief outline of the plot of the *Conquest of Granada*, the most brilliant and successful among them, will best explain this definition:—

The scene is laid in the Moorish kingdom of Granada; the period is the fifteenth century, about the time of the conquest of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella. Almanzor, a peerless and

invincible Moorish knight errant, who owns no master upon earth, nor has hitherto stooped to love, breaks in upon a fight between two Moorish factions at Granada, and by the might of his single arm puts the combatants to flight. He then offers his services to the Moorish king Boabdelin. He transfers his allegiance several times, in the course of the play, from the king to his plotting brother Abdalla, and back again; but the side, whichever it is, that he supports, with ease puts its enemies to the rout. His love, when he once yields to the passion, is as romantic as his valour. While aiding Abdalla, he takes captive Almahide, a noble lady betrothed to Boabdelin. The first glance of her eyes causes him to fall desperately in love; but hearing of her engagement, he magnanimously resolves to release her. Later, after he has carried his sword to the side of the king, and having provoked Boabdelin by his arrogance to order his guards to fall upon him, has been overpowered and sentenced to die, Almahide obtains his pardon as the price of her consenting to marry the king immediately. Hearing this, Almanzor would have killed himself; but Almahide lays her command upon him to live, and he obeys. After he has left the court, and the Christian armies are pressing strongly forward, a word from her recalls him, and his prowess rolls back for a time the tide of invasion. In the concluding battle the king is slain, and Almanzor recognizes in the Spanish general, after nearly killing him, his own father, from whom he had been separated in infancy. Almahide and he become Christians, and agree to marry when her year of widowhood is expired.

Such was the material of which Dryden's plays were composed down to the year 1671, — a notable epoch in his dramatic career. The heroic play, it must be evident, from its tumid, exaggerated style, offered a broad mark for a clever satirist; and its weak points were accordingly seized with great effect by the Duke of Buckingham and his coadjutors Sprat and Butler, in a play produced in that year. This was the famous comedy of the *Rehearsal,* in which Dryden himself figures under the character of Bayes. The poet who, for one of the *genus irritabile,* was singularly free from personal vanity, felt

that he had received a home-thrust, remained silent, and speedily abandoned the line of the heroic drama. But he did not forget his obligations to Buckingham, and repaid them with interest a few years later, when he drew the portrait of Zimri in *Absalom and Achitophel.*

In his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, published in 1668, Dryden had earnestly argued that rhyme, which he calls the most noble verse, is alone fit for tragedy, which he calls the most noble species of composition; and had therefore by implication condemned the use of blank verse by Shakspeare. But as his judgment grew clearer, and his taste more refined, he saw cause for changing his opinion. Some striking lines in the prologue to the tragedy of *Aurungzebe*, produced in 1675, mark this point in the progress of his mind. He is inclined, he says, to damn his own play,—

> "Not that it's worse than what before he writ,
> But he has now another taste of wit;
> And, to confess a truth, though out of time,
> Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rhyme.
> Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
> And nature flies him like enchanted ground;
> What verse can do, he has performed in this,
> Which he presumes the most correct of his;
> But spite of all his pride, a secret shame
> Invades his breast at Shakspeare's sacred name:
> And when he hears his godlike Romans rage,
> He, in a just despair, would quit the stage;
> And to an age less polished, more unskilled,
> Does with disdain the foremost honours yield."

In his next play, *All for Love*, he abandoned rhyme, and never afterwards returned to it. The influence of Shakspeare becomes more and more perceptible in the later plays, particularly in *Don Sebastian*, the finest of all Dryden's tragedies, produced in 1690. Thus the attempt to divert the taste of the play-going public from British to French and Spanish models was renounced by the projector himself, and replaced by a steady and continuous

effort to raise Shakspeare to his just rank in the estimation of his countrymen. It need hardly be said that, up to the present time, the work of appreciation, commenced by Dryden, has gone on in an unbroken development.

In comedy, however, a new school arose, of which the tone and form may certainly be traced to the unrivalled genius of Molière. The "comedy of manners," of which Congreve, Etherege, and Wycherley, were in our present period the chief representatives, exhibited, in polished and witty prose, the modes of acting, thinking, and talking, prevalent in the fashionable society of the time. That society was a grossly immoral one, and the plays which reflected its image were no less so. Congreve, the most eminent writer of this school, produced only five plays, one of which, the *Mourning Bride*, is a tragedy. His comedies are, the *Old Bachelor* (1693), the *Double Dealer* (1694), *Love for Love* (1695), and the *Way of the World* (1700). Congreve was the intimate friend of Dryden, who appointed him his literary executor, and in some well-known lines entreated him to be watchful over his memory: —

> "But you, whom every muse and grace adorn,
> Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
> Be kind to my remains; and oh, defend,
> Against your judgment, your departed friend!
> Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,
> But shade those laurels which descend to you:
> And take for tribute what these lines express,
> You merit more, nor could my love do less."

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the immorality of the stage began to be thought intolerable. In this respect the stage had remained stationary since the Restoration, while the morals of English society had been gradually becoming purer. This general feeling found an exponent in Jeremy Collier, a non-juring*

* That is, one who refused to take the oath of allegiance to King William.

divine, who wrote in 1698 his *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the Stage.* Both Dryden and Congreve were vigorously assailed in this work on account of their dramatic misdeeds. Dryden magnanimously pleaded guilty to the main charge, in the preface to his *Fables*, published in 1700, although he maintained that Collier had in many places perverted his meaning by his glosses, and was "too much given to horse-play in his raillery." "I will not say," he continues, "that *the zeal of God's house has eaten him up;* but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility." After a time, Collier's attack produced its effect; the public taste became purer; the intellect of the country became ashamed of the stage, and turned to cultivate other branches of literature; and from that time the English drama tended downwards to that condition of feebleness and inanity which reached its maximum about a hundred years later.

Learning: — Usher; Selden; Gale, &c.

The state of learning in England during this period was not so high as it has been generally esteemed. Selden says in his *Table Talk*—"The Jesuits and the lawyers of France, and the Low Country men, have engrossed all learning. The rest of the world make nothing but homilies." He was glancing here at the eloquent divines, Andrewes, Hall, Taylor, &c., whose works form the favourite theology of an Anglican library. There was indeed abundance of *illustrative*, but little *productive* learning. The divines above mentioned, in their sermons, ransack for illustrations the whole series of the Greek and Latin authors, and show no slight acquaintance with councils and Fathers; but they use all this learning merely to serve some immediate purpose; they do not digest or analyse

it with a view to obtaining from it permanent literary results. Usher, the Irishman, is the chief exception. James Usher, one of the three first matriculated students of Trinity College, Dublin *, upon its opening in 1593, rose to be Protestant primate of Armagh ; but he left Ireland in 1640, and, excusing himself on the plea of the social confusion which prevailed, never afterwards returned to it. His treatise, *De Ecclesiarum Britannicarum primordiis*, and his celebrated *Annales* (a digest of universal history from the creation to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus), are works of solid learning and research, which even yet are not superseded. Selden himself possessed a great deal of abstruse learning; probably no Englishman ever dived so deep into Rabbinical literature, or was so completely at home in certain branches of antiquarian research. But he cannot be compared with the great Dutchman of the age, Hugo Grotius, whom he met in controversy †, nor with the Spanish Jesuit, Suarez. He was narrower, more lawyer-like, and less philosophical, than either of those two great men. The names of Gale, Gataker, Potter, and Stanley, are the most respectable that we can produce in the department of scholarship during the remainder of the period. Potter's *Greek Antiquities*, first published in 1697, was a text-book in all British schools for nearly a century and a half, having been superseded only within these few years by the fuller and more critical treatises for which German thought and erudition have prepared the way. Of Bentley, the prince of English scholars, we shall speak in the next chapter.

* Usher actively aided in the formation of the Trinity College Library, and his MSS., given after his death to the college by Charles II., form a valuable portion of its collections. See his life by Aikin.

† Grotius wrote a book called *Mare Liberum* asserting the right of free fishery in the narrow seas near the English coast, to which Selden replied by his *Mare Clausum*, denying that right.

PROSE WRITINGS.

Fiction: — "Pilgrim's Progress;" Oratory.

In the department of prose fiction, this period, but for one remarkable work, is absolutely sterile. In the exciting times of Charles I. and the Commonwealth, men were in too earnest a mood to spend much time in the contemplation of imaginary scenes and characters. Nor, during the twenty-eight years which separated the Revolution from the Restoration, had the agitation of society subsided sufficiently to admit of the formation of a novel-reading public, by which term is meant that large class of persons, easy in their circumstances, but victims to *ennui*, from the tranquillity and uniformity of their daily avocations, —who seek in fiction the excitement which the stability of the social system has banished from their actual life. It must be remembered, also, that the drama was the surest road to popularity for an inventive genius up to the end of the century. Soon afterwards the stage fell into discredit, and the novel immediately appeared to fill the vacant place.

One exception, however, to this rule of sterility is to be found in Bunyan's celebrated *Pilgrim's Progress*. John Bunyan, a native of Elstow, near Bedford, was of obscure origin, and was brought up to the trade of a tinker. His youth, according to his own account, was wild and vicious; but having been impressed by the sermon of a Baptist preacher, at which he was accidentally present, he was led to enter into himself, and gradually reformed his life. Forsaking the Church of England, he joined the Baptists, and became a preacher among them. When, after the Restoration, severe laws were passed against non-conformity, Bunyan, refusing to be silenced, was thrown into Bedford gaol, where he was detained twelve years. Here it was that he wrote his famous alle-

gory, the object of which is to represent, under the figure of a journey taken by a pilgrim, the course of a Christian's life in his passage through this world to the world to come. No original work in the English language has had a greater circulation than the *Pilgrim's Progress*, nor been translated into a greater number of foreign languages. The work was first published complete in 1684; Bunyan died in 1688.

Under the head of Oratory we find scarcely anything deserving of mention. Cromwell's speeches, with their designed ambiguity, their cloudy pietism, their involved long-winded sentences, are hardly readable, in spite of Mr. Carlyle's editorial industry. The speeches given in Clarendon's History are often very interesting; but the difficulty of knowing how much may be the author's own composition detracts, of course, from their value. Pamphlets issued in shoals from the press during all this period.

History and Biography: — Milton, Ludlow, Clarendon, &c.; Wood's "Athenæ," Pepys, Evelyn, &c.

In our last notice of historical writing, it appeared that in the first quarter of the century the best of our historians had written on the affairs of Turkey and on the ancient world. But as the century wore on, and the shadow of the civil war began to darken the sky, English contemporary history became a subject of such absorbing and pressing interest, that our writers had no thought to spare for that of foreign nations and distant times. Fuller, Milton, Ludlow, May, Whitlocke, Rushworth, and Clarendon, besides many inferior writers, wrote entirely, so far as they were historians at all, upon English affairs. Thomas Fuller, a clergyman, of great wit and originality, wrote a *Church History of Britain from the Birth of*

Jesus Christ until the Year 1648; this work was published in 1656. Milton's *History of England* is but a fragment, extending "from the first traditional beginning to the Norman Conquest." It is remarkable as being the first regular history in which doubt is expressed as to the historical value of the British legends, derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth, and gravely repeated by all the old chroniclers. Ludlow was one of Cromwell's generals, and signed the warrant for Charles I.'s execution; his *Memoirs*, written during his exile in Switzerland, relating, for the most part, to events in which he had himself been an actor, were first published after his death in 1698. John May, a lawyer, described the civil strife, both in Parliament and in the field, from the parliamentary point of view; his work, published about 1650, is described by Hallam as a kind of contrast to that of Clarendon. Bulstrode Whitlocke, one of the commissioners of the Great Seal under Cromwell, composed some dull, but in many respects important, memoirs, which were first published in 1682. Rushworth's *Historical Collections* — a perfect mine of information — appeared in 1659. He was a clerk in the House of Commons, and for many years was in the habit of taking notes of "speeches and passages at conferences in Parliament, and from the king's own mouth what he spoke to both houses, and was upon the stage continually an eye and an ear witness of the greatest transactions." * His Collections range over the period from 1618 to 1644.

Of works subsidiary to history, *e.g.* biographies, personal memoirs, diaries, &c., we meet with a considerable number. The most important among them is the well-known *Athenæ Oxonienses* of Anthony à Wood, a "History of all the writers and bishops educated at Oxford from 1500 to 1695." Fuller's well-known biogra-

* Wood's *Athenæ*.

phical work on the *Worthies of England,* containing sketches of about eighteen hundred individuals — among others, of Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakspeare,— arranged under the several counties of England and Wales, appeared in 1662, the year after his death. Izaak Walton, better known for his *Treatise on Angling,* wrote Lives of several eminent Anglican divines, including Hooker, Donne, and Sanderson. Baxter's *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ,* a curious autobiography, confused, however, in arrangement and badly edited, first appeared in 1696. All the material portions of it are given in Orme's *Life of Baxter.* The curious Diary of Samuel Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty, extending over the years 1660—1669, was first given to the world in 1825, having lain veiled in its original cipher, till raked out of the MS. repository of the Pepysian Library, and deciphered under the superintendence of Lord Braybrooke. Andrew Marvell, in his *Seasonable Argument,* printed in 1677, thus disposes of Pepys, who was then member for the borough of Castle Rising: — "Castle Rising: Samuel Pepys, once a taylour, then serving-man to the Lord Sandwitch, now secretary to the Admiralty, got by passes and other illegal wayes £40,000." It was not Samuel, however, but his father, who was the tailor. John Evelyn, a country gentleman, skilled in the mysteries of planting and landscape-gardening, is the author of a *Diary,* first published in 1818, which, among other matters, contains an interesting account of the great fire of London, of which he was an eye-witness.

We have few or no narratives of adventure, by sea or land, to record in connection with this period. A time of civil war concentrates the thoughts and the activity of men upon their own country, just as in the systole of the heart the blood all flows together to the vital centre. In tranquil times, the counter movement — the diastole — sets in, and the energies of many of the most stirring and

gifted persons in the nation are turned outwards, and employed over wide and remote areas in the search of excitement, or the investigation of nature.

Theology :— Hall; Jeremy Taylor; Gother; Baxter, &c.

This is the Augustan period of Anglican divinity. If we examine the literature of the controversy that raged, in this as in the previous period, between the Church of England and the Puritans, we shall find that, if we put aside the writings of Milton, the Episcopalian writers immeasurably excelled their opponents both in talent and learning. Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, comes next for mention in order of time after Bishop Andrewes. By his reply to the pamphlet produced by five Puritan ministers, who wrote under the fictitious name of "Smectymnuus," he drew upon himself the fierce invectives of Milton. His *Meditations* and *Characters* will be noticed in the next section. Ejected by the Puritans from the see of Norwich in 1643, he retired to a small estate at Higham, where he died at a very advanced age in 1656.

Jeremy Taylor, the most eloquent of English writers, was born at Cambridge in 1613. Like nearly all the Anglican divines of this period, he inclined to the tenets of Arminius, a Dutch theologian, who died in 1608, and whose opinions were vehemently anathematized after his death by the Calvinistic synod of Dort. If asked, *what* precisely the Arminians held? one might answer, as Morley is said to have done * when a country squire put him the question, "All the best bishoprics and deaneries in England;"—it will be sufficient, however, to say that Arminianism was a species of Pelagianism, and arose by way of reaction against the predestinarian extravagances

* Clarendon's *Autobiography.*

of the Calvinists. Coleridge gives the following graphic account of the English Arminians:—"Towards the close of the reign of our first James, and during the period from the accession of Charles I. to the restoration of his profligate son, there arose a party of divines, Arminians (and many of them Latitudinarians) in their creed, but devotees of the throne and the altar, soaring High Churchmen and ultra Royalists. Much as I dislike their scheme of doctrine and detest their principles of government, both in Church and State, I cannot but allow that they formed a galaxy of learning and talent, and that among them the Church of England finds her stars of the first magnitude. Instead of regarding the Reformation established under Edward VI. as imperfect, they accused the Reformers, some of them openly, but all in their private opinions, of having gone too far; and while they were willing to keep down (and if they could not reduce him to a primacy of honour, to keep out) the Pope, ... they were zealous to restore the hierarchy, and to substitute the authority of the Fathers, Canonists, and Councils of the first six or seven centuries, and [some of the] later Doctors and Schoolmen, for the names of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Calvin, and the systematic theologians who rejected all testimony but that of their Bible." *

Taylor's earlier works, written in the lifetime of Charles I., while he was (to use Coleridge's phrase) "ambling on the high road of preferment," were all of the High Church school; that is, they were directed to the defence of the sacred character of Episcopacy, and to the vindication of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England against the Puritans. But during the Protectorate he published a work of a very different complexion. "Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis." This was his famous *Liberty of Prophesying*, a treatise on tolera-

* *Literary Remains*, vol. iii. p. 385.

tion, in which he argued that the State should tolerate all sects which agreed to receive the Apostles' Creed as their common standard of faith. This was nothing more than a political application of the view propounded by Chillingworth in his *Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation* (published in 1637), to the effect that the profession of Christianity ought to involve nothing more than subscription to this creed. Milton's *Areopagitica*, or Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, published in 1644, should be compared with the *Liberty of Prophesying*, the former being a plea for a free press, the latter a plea for freedom of public worship. Coleridge remarks—"The *Liberty of Prophesying* is an admirable work, in many respects, and calculated to produce a much greater effect on the many than Milton's treatise on the same subject; on the other hand, Milton's is throughout unmixed truth; and the man who in reading the two does not feel the contrast between the single-mindedness of the one, and the *strabismus* in the other, is — in the road of preferment." *

After the Restoration, Taylor was appointed Protestant Bishop of Down. Episcopacy was now again dominant, and we find Taylor "basely disclaiming and disavowing the principle of toleration," and excusing himself as best he could for his late liberalism. Of his remaining works the most remarkable are, the *Holy Living* and the *Holy Dying*, devotional treatises, of which it is impossible not to admire the depth of thought, the fervour, and the eloquence. Taylor died in 1667.

Of the other Anglican divines who flourished in the reign of Charles II., we can only specify Bishop Bull, author of the *Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*; Isaac Barrow, master of Trinity College, Cambridge, who wrote a learned work on the Supremacy, but who is, perhaps, even better known as

* *Literary Remains*, vol. iii. p. 204.

a mathematician; and Pearson, author of an exposition of the Apostles' Creed. The leading divines in this reign cared little to continue the old controversy with the Puritans, whom they regarded as a fallen and innocuous foe, but rather turned their arms against Catholicism. This was particularly the case after the accession of James II. Stillingfleet, Tillotson, and others, carried on this warfare with great literary ability; and, in point of style and forcible rhetoric, were certainly more than a match for their Catholic opponents, of whom the most noted was the excellent Gother. Dryden, though his blows were wonderfully telling, entered into the strife rather as a guerilla than as a regular combatant.

A new school, the rise of which is graphically described by Burnet in his *History of his Own Times*, made its appearance towards the end of the reign of Charles II. This was the school of the Latitudinarian, or Platonizing, divines, the chief among whom were, Archbishop Leighton, Henry More, Wilkins, and Cudworth. They all belonged to the Church of England; but it was their desire to see the terms of church membership so modified, by the suppression, or at any rate non-imposition, of those parts of the Anglican doctrine and discipline which were obnoxious to other Protestants, as to admit of a *comprehension* of the great body of the Nonconformists within the pale of the National church. Soon after the Revolution, a bill for effecting this comprehension was brought into Parliament, and nearly passed into law; it was, however, ultimately rejected.

The chief Puritan name in the latter part of the century is that of Richard Baxter. Baxter was a Presbyterian; and, although he actively exerted himself in favour of the Restoration, was ejected soon after it, under the Act of Uniformity, from his living of Kidderminster. He was a man of great activity of mind, and readiness of pen; and his writings — from the thick volume to the occasional tract

— are almost countless. He was a zealous polemic, and levelled no small number of his publications at what he called "Popery." It is curious, however, that not one of these productions appeared in the reign of James II., — a period when so uncompromising a divine would have found it, one would have thought, especially incumbent upon him to uphold his testimony. But the series breaks off before the accession of James, and is not renewed till after the Revolution. This silence is explained, of course, by the community of political interests which the king, by his declarations of indulgence, strove to establish, and, in part, succeeded in establishing, between the Catholics and the Nonconformists. Baxter's most popular work is a devotional treatise, published in 1649, entitled *The Saints' Everlasting Rest.*

Philosophy: — Hobbes; Locke.

Though the philosophical teaching of the English Universities remained *in statu quo* during this period, speculation was common among cultivated minds, and developed in certain branches of inquiry marked and important results. In metaphysics occurs the name of Thomas Hobbes, and the still more famous name of John Locke. Political reasoning was earnestly followed by Milton, Hobbes, Sidney, Harrington, Filmer, and Locke. Essay-writing was attempted by Felltham, and more successfully by Bishop Hall and Sir Thomas Browne. Lastly, the "new philosophy," as it was called in that age, that is, the philosophy of experiment, received a strong impulse through the incorporation, in 1662, of the Royal Society.

Hobbes, the "philosopher of Malmesbury," was born in the year of the Spanish Armada, and is said to have owed the nervous timidity of his constitution to the terror with which his mother regarded the approach of the in-

vading host. After a residence of five years at Oxford, he travelled on the continent, and made the acquaintance of several eminent men. Returning to England, he devoted himself to the careful study of the classical historians and poets. He early conceived a dislike to the democratical or movement party of that day, and in 1628 published a translation of *Thucydides*, "that the follies of the Athenian democrats might be made known to his fellow-citizens." For the greater portion of his long life, after attaining to manhood, he resided as a tutor or as a friend in the family of the Earls of Devonshire. The stormy opening of the Long Parliament, in 1640, led him to apprehend civil war, from which his timid nature instinctively shrank; he accordingly went over to France, and took up his abode at Paris. Among his philosophical acquaintance there, were Gassendi and Father Mersenne. The former was as great a sceptic as himself; the latter, he says*, once when he was dangerously ill, tried to make him a Catholic, but without the least success. His political treatise, *De Cive*, was published at Paris in 1646. The *Leviathan*, containing his entire philosophical system, appeared in 1651; the *De Corpore*, a physiological work, in 1655, and the *De Homine* in 1658. At the age of eighty he wrote his *Behemoth*, a history of the civil war, and, about the same time, a Latin poem on the rise and growth of the Papal power. In his eighty-seventh year he published a metrical version of the *Odyssey*, and in the following year one of the *Iliad;* both, however, are worthless. He died in 1679, being then ninety-one years old.

Few names occur in the history of our literature which are more noteworthy than that of John Locke, because there are few writers to whose influence important changes

* See his curious Latin autobiography, prefixed to the edition of his works by Sir W. Molesworth.

or advances in general opinion, upon divers important questions, can be so certainly and directly attributed. His political doctrines have been persistently carried into practice by his own country ever since his death, and recently by other countries also; and the results have — to outward appearance, at least — been singularly encouraging. By his famous *Essay on the Human Understanding*, he effectually checked the tendency to waste the efforts of the mind in sterile metaphysical discussions, and opened out a track of inquiry which the human mind has earnestly prosecuted ever since, with ever-increasing confidence in the soundness of the method, considered as a testing process, applicable to matters of fact. Lastly, his *Treatise on Education*, from which Rousseau is said to have largely borrowed in his *Emile*, contains the first suggestion of a large number of those improvements, both in the theory and practice of education, which the present age has seen effected.

Locke resided for many years in the house of his patron and friend, Lord Shaftesbury, the Achitophel of Dryden's satire, whose character the poet portrayed in those famous lines, —

> "Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
> In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
> A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
> And o'er-informed the tenement of clay."

Sharing the Whig opinions of his patron, Locke came in also for his full share of the enmity of the Court, which even demanded, in 1685, his extradition from the States-General of Holland (whither he had followed Shaftesbury after his disgrace in 1682). His friends, however, concealed him, and Locke had the satisfaction of returning to England in the fleet of the conquering William of Orange. Strange! that of the two greatest Englishmen of that day — John Locke and John Dryden — the resemblance of

whose portraits must have struck many an observer, the one should date his personal advancement and the triumph of the cause to which he adhered, from the same event which brought dismissal, ruin, and humiliation to the other!

Locke's own account of the origin of the *Essay* is interesting. In the prefatory Epistle to the Reader, he says, "Were it fit to trouble thee with the history of this Essay, I should tell thee that five or six friends, meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that rose on every side. After we had a while puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course; and that, before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with. This I proposed to the company, who all readily assented; and thereupon it was agreed that this should be our first inquiry. Some hasty and undigested thoughts on a subject I had never before considered, which I set down against our next meeting, gave the first entrance into this discourse; which, having been thus begun by chance, was continued by intreaty; written by incoherent parcels; and, after long intervals of neglect, resumed again, as my humour or occasions permitted; and at last, in a retirement, where an attendance on my health gave me leisure, it was brought into that order thou now seest it."

The order in which Locke's principal works appeared was as follows:—his first *Letter on Toleration* was published in Holland in 1688; the *Essay on the Human Understanding* appeared in 1689; the two *Treatises on Government* in 1690; the *Thoughts upon Education* in 1693; and the treatise on the *Reasonableness of Christianity* in 1695. Locke died unmarried at the house of

his friend, Sir Francis Masham, in Essex, in the year 1704.

Of the many remarkable works on political science, to which this agitated period gave birth, we shall have occasion to speak more particularly in the second part of this work. Speaking generally, these works represent the opinions of five parties: cavalier Tories, and philosophical Tories; Puritan Whigs, and constitutional Whigs; and philosophical Republicans. Sir Robert Filmer, author of the *Patriarcha*, in which the doctrine of "the right divine of kings to govern wrong" was pushed to its extreme, was the chief writer of the first party; Hobbes represented the second; Milton and Algernon Sydney the third; Locke the fourth; and Harrington the fifth. Milton's chief political treatises are, the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), and *The ready and easy Way to establish a free Commonwealth* (1660). Harrington's *Oceana*, the name by which he designates England, as his imagination painted her after being regenerated by republicanism, was published in 1656. The Protector's government at first refused to allow it to appear, but Cromwell, at the request of his favourite daughter, Elizabeth, gave his consent to the publication, coupled, however, with the dry remark, that "what he had won by the sword he should not suffer himself to be scribbled out of."

Essay Writing:—Hall; Feltham; Browne.

The examples of Bacon and Burton were followed by several gifted men in this period, who preferred jotting down detached thoughts on a variety of subjects, making as it were "Guesses at Truth" in a variety of directions, to the labour of concentrating their faculties upon a single intellectual enterprise. Thus Bishop Hall wrote, in the early part of the century, *Three Centuries of Meditations and*

Vows, each century containing a hundred short essays or papers. Felltham's *Resolves* ("resolve," in the sense of "solution of a problem"), published in 1637, is a work of the same kind. The *Religio Medici* of Sir Thomas Browne *, the knight of Norwich, is also nothing but a medley of opinions, and strange or humorous notions, quaintly and sometimes eloquently expressed, upon religion, and many other matters besides.

Physical Science.

The present Royal Society, incorporated with a view to the promotion of physical science in 1662, arose out of some scientific meetings held at Oxford in the rooms of Dr. Wilkins, the President of Wadham College. They soon had the honour of numbering among their fellows the great Newton, some of whose principal discoveries were first made known to the world in their *Proceedings*. Newton was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge; in the chapel of which society may be seen a noble statue of him by Roubillac, with the inscription, "Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit."

* Author also of *Hydriotaphia* and a *Treatise on Vulgar Errors* (1646).

CHAPTER V.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

We will commence, as in the last period, with a brief summary of the political history.

The opening of the century beheld the firm establishment of the state of things brought in at the Revolution of 1688, by the passing of the Act of Settlement, limiting the succession to the crown to Sophia, wife of the elector of Hanover, and the heirs of her body, being Protestants. The various Protestant sects had just obtained toleration; the Catholics, on the other hand, lay under the full weight of a penal code, the oppressiveness of which had just been aggravated by the passing of the Act of 1700, the avowed object of which was, to cause the forfeiture of the estates of all Catholic proprietors who refused to abandon their faith. The only palliation that Mr. Hallam can find*, with reference to this measure, is, that it was very sparingly put in force; which must indeed have been the case, otherwise there could not well be a Catholic landholder in these countries at the present moment. The Catholics had, moreover, to pay double taxes, were excluded from all public employments, and were shut out from the Universities. Much the same system was being pursued at the same time by the government of Louis XIV. towards the Huguenots of France; but with this difference, that the despotic character of the French monarchy caused the laws to be executed in France with infinitely greater rigour and punctuality than was the case in England.

* *Constitutional Hist.*, vol. iii. ch. v.

Upon the accession of Anne in 1702, a Tory ministry came into power for a short time. But its principal member — the able and unprincipled Godolphin — passed over to the Whigs, and it was Whig policy which engaged the nation in the war of the Spanish succession. Marlborough, the great Whig general, was closely connected with Godolphin by marriage. Everyone has heard of the victories of Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde. Through the intrigues of Mrs. Masham, a lady of the bed-chamber, who had obtained an ascendency over the feeble mind of the Queen, and partly in consequence of the odium which the ill-advised prosecution of Dr. Sacheverel for preaching high Toryism before Parliament, drew down upon them, the Whig ministry were dismissed in 1710. Their Tory successors, Harley, Earl of Oxford, and St. John Lord Bolingbroke, concluded the peace of Utrecht in 1713. But at the death of Anne in the following year the Tory ministers, who showed symptoms of favouring the claims of the Pretender (the son of James II.), were at once hurled from power, and the long period of Whig rule commenced, which only ended with the resignation of Sir Robert Walpole, in 1742. This celebrated minister practically ruled the country for twenty-one years, from 1721 to 1742, during which period England, through him, preserved peace with foreign powers; and such wars as arose on the continent were shorter and less destructive than they would otherwise have been. But in 1741 the temper of the country had become so warlike that a peace policy was no longer practicable, and Walpole was forced to succumb. The administration which succeeded, in which the leading spirit was that fine scholar and high-minded nobleman, Lord Carteret (afterwards Earl Granville), engaged in the Austrian succession war, on the side of Maria Theresa. England played no very distinguished part in this war, the success at Dettingen (1743) being more than counterbalanced by the reverse at Fontenoy

in the following year. The intrigues of the Pelhams drove Lord Granville from office in 1744, and the Duke of Newcastle, with his brother, Mr. Pelham, formed, with the aid of the leaders of the opposition, what was called the "Broad bottom" ministry. Newcastle — a man of small ability, but strong in his extensive parliamentary influence — remained prime minister for twelve years. In 1745 occurred the insurrection of the Highland clans in favour of the Prince Charles Edward, grandson of James II. After defeating the royal troops at Preston Pans, the Prince marched into England, and penetrated as far as Derby. But, meeting with no support, he was compelled to retreat, and in the following year his brave but irregular followers were totally routed by the Duke of Cumberland at Culloden. The continental war was terminated by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. At the breaking out of the Seven Years' War in 1756, in which England was allied with Frederic of Prussia against France and Russia, the Duke of Newcastle's incapacity caused everything to miscarry. Minorca was lost, and the Duke of Cumberland capitulated, with his whole army, to the French, at Closter-seven. Pitt, the great Commoner, the honest statesman, the terrible and resistless orator, had to be admitted, though sorely against the king's will, to a seat in the Cabinet. The force of his genius and the contagion of his enthusiasm effected a marvellous change; and the memorable year 1759 witnessed the triumph of the allies at Minden, the victory of Wolfe on the heights of Abraham, which led to the conquest of Canada, and the defeat of the French fleet by Hawke off Belleisle.

Pitt had to resign in 1761, making way for the king's favourite, Lord Bute, who concluded the treaty of Fontainebleau at the end of 1762, by which Canada, Cape Breton, part of Louisiana, Florida, the Senegal, and Minorca, were ceded to Britain. For the next twelve years England was universally regarded as the most powerful

and successful nation in Europe. But the war had been frightfully expensive, and Mr. Grenville, who was prime minister from 1763 to 1765, conceived in an unlucky hour the idea that a revenue could be raised from America by taxes laid on the colonies by the authority of Parliament. The Repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766 delayed the bursting of the storm; but fresh attempts at taxation being made, and resisted by the people of Boston, the war of independence broke out in the year 1775, and, through the help of France, which allied itself with the new Republic in 1778, resulted in the recognition by Great Britain of the independence of the United States in 1783. Lord Chatham, who had all along condemned the awkward and irritating measures of coercion employed by the ministry, vainly opposed, in his memorable dying speech in the House of Lords, 'the dismemberment of this ancient monarchy.'

The administration which conducted the American war was presided over by the Tory premier, Lord North, who governed the country for twelve years, from 1770 to 1782. Up to the former date the powers of government had, ever since 1688, been exercised, with the exception of a few brief intervals, by the great Whig families — the Russells, Pelhams, Fitzroys, Bentincks, &c. (together with the commoners whom they selected to assist them)—who prided themselves on having brought about the Revolution. It cannot be denied that on the whole this junto governed with great vigour and success, and that the English aristocracy never showed itself to greater advantage. With the advent of Lord North to power, all was changed. Great questions were handled by little men, and the preponderance of intellectual power remained always on the side of the opposition, which numbered Fox, Burke, Barrè, Dunning, and Sheridan, in its ranks. At length, in 1782, Lord North was driven from the helm, and after the brief administrations of the Marquis of Rockingham and

Lord Shelburne, and that which resulted from the coalition of Fox with Lord North, the younger Pitt came into power at the end of 1783, and commenced his long and eventful career as prime minister. His policy was at first purely Whig and constitutional, like that of his father; but, after 1789, the attitude which he was compelled to take in relation to the extreme or revolutionary liberalism of France, gradually changed the position of his government to such an extent as to make it essentially Tory, as being supported by the Tory party in Parliament and in the country. Pitt, however, remained personally a sincere and consistent liberal to the last.

General Characteristics:—Pope and Johnson; Poetry from 1700 to 1745.

The eighteenth century was a period of repose and stability in England's political history. Saved by her insular position from the desolating wars which ravaged the continent, and acquiescing in the compromise between theoretical liberty and prescriptive right established at the Revolution of 1688, the nation enjoyed during the whole of the period, except in the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1745, profound internal peace. Then was the time, it might have been imagined, for the fructification under the most favourable circumstances of whatever germs of thought the philosophy and poetry of preceding ages had implanted in the English mind, in the noblest and purest forms of literature and art.

Such, however, was far from being the case. The literature of the eighteenth century, though occupying a large space to our eyes at the present day, from the proximity of the time and the want of other thinkers who have taken up the ground more satisfactorily, is for the most part essentially of the fugitive sort, and will probably be

considered in future ages as not having treated with true appreciation one single subject which it has handled. To speculate upon the causes of this inferiority does not lie within the scope of the present work; we have simply to note the fact.

The rising of the clans in 1745 divides our period into two nearly equal portions, of the first of which Pope may be taken as the representative author; of the second, Johnson.

Alexander Pope was born at the house of his father, a linen merchant, residing in Lombard Street, London, in the year 1688. A sojourn at Lisbon had led to the father's conversion to Catholicism, and young Pope was brought up, so far as circumstances would allow, in the rigid belief and practice of his father's creed. His religion excluded him from the public schools and universities of England; his education was therefore private, and not, it would appear, of the best kind. Such as it was, it was not continued long; so that Pope may be considered as eminently a self-taught man — a self-cultivated poet. His poetic gift manifested itself early: —

> "As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
> I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

The classical poets soon became his chief study and delight, and he valued the moderns in proportion as they had drunk more or less deeply of the classical spirit. The genius of the Gothic or Romantic ages inspired him at this time with no admiration whatever, so that in the retrospect of the poetical and critical masterpieces of past times, which concludes the third book of the *Essay on Criticism*, he can find no bright spot in the thick intellectual darkness, from the downfall of the Western Empire to the age of Leo X. The only native writers whom he deigns to mention are — Roscommon and Walsh! To the author of the *Essay on Translated Verse* he was indeed largely indebted, not only for the general conception

of the *Essay on Criticism*, but even for some of the best expressions in it.* Walsh, too, who was a man of fortune, was his patron and kind entertainer, and gratitude led Pope to do him, as a poet, a little more than justice. But in spite of minor blemishes one cannot be blind to the transcendent merits of this production, which, taken as the composition of a youth of twenty or twenty-one, is an intellectual and rhythmical achievement perhaps unparalleled.

In a memorable passage, containing not a few illustrious names, Pope has told us how he came to publish:—

> "But why then publish? Granville the polite —
> And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write:
> Well-natured Garth inflamed with early praise,
> And Congreve loved, and Swift endured my lays;
> The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield, read;
> E'en mitred Rochester would nod the head:
> And St. John's self (Great Dryden's friend before)
> With open arms received one poet more."†

Dryden he had just seen, and no more ("Virgilium tantum vidi" is his expression), in the last year of the old poet's life, he being then a boy of twelve. He knew Wycherley, the dramatist, then a somewhat battered, worn-out relic of the gay reign of Charles II., and wrote an excellent letter on the occasion of his death in 1716. His relations to

* Roscommon has, speaking of Dryden —

> "And with a *brave disorder* shows his art."

Pope follows with —

> "From vulgar bounds with *brave disorder* part."

Again, Roscommon has—

> "Then make the proper use of each extreme."
> "And write with fury, but correct with phlegm."

Of this Pope's lines are but the echo —

> "Our critics take a contrary extreme,
> They judge with fury, but correct with phlegm."

† *Imitations of Horace.*

Addison were characteristic on both sides. Steele introduced them to each other in 1712. Several trifling circumstances which occurred in the three following years conspired to create an unpleasant state of feeling between them, which was brought to a climax in 1715 by the encouragement given by Addison to his friend Tickell in his project of a rival translation of Homer. Pope's version and that by Tickell came out nearly together, and nothing can be clearer than the great superiority of the former. Yet Addison (one cannot but fear, out of jealousy), while praising both translations, pronounced that Tickell's "had more of Homer." This was the occasion of Pope's writing that wonderful piece of satire, which will be found at a subsequent page. Addison made no direct reply, but a few months later he, in a paper published in the *Freeholder*, spoke in terms of high praise of Pope's translation. The poet's susceptible nature was touched by this generosity, and he, in his turn, immortalised Addison in his fifth satire:—

> "And in our days (excuse some courtly stains)
> No whiter page than Addison remains;
> He from the taste obscene reclaims our youth,
> And sets the passions on the side of truth;
> Forms the soft bosom with the gentlest art,
> And pours each human virtue in the heart."

Far more close and cordial were the relations between Pope and Swift. Their acquaintance began at the time of Swift's residence in London, between 1710 and 1713. The famous Dean was twenty-one years older than Pope; but there must have been a strong inherent sympathy between their characters, for they became fast friends at once, and continued so until Swift's mind broke down. Each had all the tastes of the author and man of letters; each was audacious and satirical; each saw through and despised the hollowness of society, though in their different ways each strove to raise himself in it. Swift's ambition was for power; he wished that his literary successes should

serve merely as a basis and vantage-ground whence to scale the high places of the State; Pope's ambition was purely for fame, and he regarded literary success, not as a means, but as an end. It certainly shows some real elevation of soul in both, that two men, each so irritable, and whose very points of resemblance might have made it easier for them to come into collision, should have remained steady friends for twenty-five years. The utter absence of jealousy in both will perhaps account for the fact. Soon after they became acquainted, Swift was able to do Pope a great service. In 1713, the prospectus of the translation of the *Iliad* appeared; and Swift, who was at that time a real power in London society, used his opportunities to get the subscription list well filled. Chiefly by his exertions, the list became such a long one, that the proceeds amounted to a small fortune for Pope, and set him at ease on the score of money matters for the remainder of his life. His labours in connection with the translation of Homer extended from 1713 to 1725. He employed in translating the *Odyssey* the services of two minor poets, Fenton and Broome, so that only one-half of the version is from his own hand.

In 1725 Pope published an edition of Shakspeare. His preface shows a juster appreciation of the great dramatist than was then common; yet his own taste pointed too decidedly to the French and classical school to admit of his doing full justice to the chief of the Romantic. He was the first to amend two or three corrupt readings by slight and happy alterations, which have since been universally adopted. Such is his substitution of "south" for the old reading "sound," in the lines in *Twelfth Night*—

> "Oh! it came o'er mine ear like the sweet *south*
> That breathes over a bank of violets;"

and of "strides" for "sides," (and Tarquin's ravishing *strides*,") in *Macbeth*.

The first three books of the *Dunciad*, which was dedicated to Swift, appeared anonymously in 1728. In it the poet revenges himself on a number of obscure poets and feeble critics, who had — though not without provocation — attacked and libelled him. The very obscurity of these individuals detracts much from the permanent interest of the satire. The persons and parties introduced by Dryden in his *Absalom and Achitophel* occupied elevated situations upon the public stage, and, as the satire itself is conceived and composed in a corresponding strain of elevation, it is probable that, so long as English history interests us, that satire will be read. But the Cookes, Curlls, Concanens, and other personages of the *Dunciad* are to us simple names which suggest no ideas; and even the intellectual mastery of the author, great though it be, is hardly so evident to us as the frantic vindictiveness which strains every nerve to say the most wounding and humiliating things.

The famous *Essay on Man* appeared anonymously in 1732. It was the fruit of Pope's familiar intercourse with the sceptic Lord Bolingbroke, and reflects in the popular literature the opinions of a philosophical school presently to be noticed. No poem in the language contains a greater number of single lines which have passed into proverbs.* The various satirical pieces known as the *Moral Essays* and the *Imitations of Horace*, with Prologue and Epilogue, were published between the years 1731 and 1738.

* For example —

"A mighty maze, but not without a plan."
"The proper study of mankind is man."
"The enormous faith of many made for one."
"Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
"The rest is all but leather or prunella."
"An honest man's the noblest work of God."
"Damn'd to everlasting fame."
"But looks through Nature up to Nature's God."
"From grave to gay, from lively to severe," &c., &c.

A fourth book was added to the *Dunciad* in 1742, and the whole poem was re-cast, so as to assign the enviable distinction of king of the dunces to Colly Cibber, the poet laureate, instead of Theobald. Pope died in May, 1744.

Politically, Pope occupied through life a position of much dignity. Both Halifax and Secretary Craggs desired to pension him, but he declined their offers. Thanks to Homer, he could say truly —

> "I live and thrive,
> Indebted to no prince or peer alive."

His neutral position is again indicated in the lines —

> "In moderation placing all my glory,
> While Tories call me Whig, and Whigs a Tory."

But in principle, it is clear that he infinitely preferred the politics of Locke to those of Filmer. This is proved by such lines as —

> "For sure, if Dulness sees a grateful day,
> 'Tis in the shade of arbitrary sway
> * * * * * * *
> May you, my Cam and Isis, preach it long,
> 'The right divine of kings to govern wrong.'"

On the other hand, some of his dearest and most intimate friends, as Swift and Bolingbroke, were Tories.

In religious belief, Pope was of course professedly a Catholic, but there is scarcely a page of his poetry in which the leaven of that scepticism which pervaded the society in which he moved may not be traced. At the court of the Prince of Wales at Richmond, where Pope was a frequent and a welcome guest, free-thinking was in favour, and Tindal, the Deist, was zealously patronised: —

> "But art thou one whom new opinions sway,
> One who believes where Tindal leads the way?"

The religious indifferentism which Pope assumed had undoubtedly many conveniences, in an age when serious

and *bonâ-fide* Catholicism was repressed by every kind of vexatious penal disability, and the literary circle in which he lived was composed exclusively of Protestants or unbelievers. He styled himself —

> "Papist or Protestant, or both between,
> Like good Erasmus, in an honest mean."

Perhaps, too, it may be said, that, independently of external influences, his own highly intellectualised nature predisposed him to set reason above faith, to value great thinkers more than great saints. But he would not let himself be driven or persuaded into any act of formal apostasy. When, upon the death of his father, in 1717, his friend Bishop Atterbury hinted that he was now free to consult his worldly interests by joining the established church, Pope absolutely rejected the proposal — upon singular and non-Catholic grounds, it is true — but so decidedly as to make it impossible that the advice should be repeated. As he grew older, Pope's sympathies with the free-thinking school, at least with the rank and file of their writers, seem to have declined; very disrespectful mention is made of them in the *Dunciad*. Their spokesman is thus introduced in the fourth book: —

> "'Be that my task,' replies a gloomy clerk,
> Sworn foe to mystery, yet divinely dark;
> Whose pious hope aspires to see the day
> When moral evidence shall quite decay" &c.

Finally, whatever may have been the aberrations of his life, its closing scene was one of faith and pious resignation. The priest who administered to him the last sacraments "came out from the dying man, . . . penetrated to the last degree with the state of mind in which he found his penitent, resigned, and wrapt up in the love of God and man."* Bolingbroke, like the friends of Béranger, on

* Carruthers' *Life of Pope.*

a like occasion, is said to have flown into a great fit of passion at hearing of the priest being called in.

So much space has been given to Pope that we can notice but very briefly the remaining poets of his time. The reign of Anne was considered in the last century to be the Augustan age of English literature; nor, when we remember the great number of poets who then flourished, the high patronage which many of them received, and the extent to which literary tastes then pervaded the upper ranks of society, shall we pronounce the term altogether misplaced. At any rate, by contrast to the middle period of the century, its opening was bright indeed. Johnson, in the Life of Prior, observes: — "Everything has its day. Through the reigns of William and Anne no prosperous event passed undignified by poetry. In the last war [the Seven Years' War], when France was disgraced and overpowered in every quarter of the globe, when Spain, coming to her assistance, only shared her calamities, and the name of an Englishman was reverenced through Europe, no poet was heard amidst the general acclamation; the fame of our councillors and heroes was entrusted to the gazetteer." The genius of Chatham — the heroism of Wolfe — are unsung to this day.

Addison, the son of a Westmoreland clergyman, was singled out, while yet at Oxford, as a fit object for Government patronage, and sent to travel with a pension. In that learned, but then disloyal, University, a sincere and clever Whig was a phenomenon so rare, that the Whig ministry seem to have thought they could not do too much to encourage the growth of the species. While on the continent, Addison produced several heroic poems in praise of King William, written in the heroic couplet, in which Dryden had achieved so much. In 1704 he celebrated in *The Campaign* the battle of Blenheim. For this he was rewarded with the post of Commissioner of Appeals. Addison also wrote a few hymns, the simple beauty of which

forms a marked contrast to the stiff and laboured sublimity of his heroics. His dramatic and prose works will be noticed presently.

The poet Gay was also dependent on patrons, but they were in his case private noblemen, not ministers of State. Gay's *Fables* is a book which most of us have read with pleasure in early life. This kindly-natured man, whom Pope describes as —

> "In wit a man, simplicity a child,"

belonged to the race of careless, thoughtless poets described by Horace, who have little idea how to get on in the world; and, but for the kind interference of the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry, who took him into their house during the latter years of his life, and managed his affairs for him, his embarrassments might have altogether overwhelmed him. He died at the early age of forty-four.

Parnell is now only remembered as the author of the *Hermit*. He was the friend of Harley, Earl of Oxford, to whom Pope sent the edition of his poems, of which he superintended the publication after his death, recommending them to the fallen statesman in a few graceful lines, musical but weighty, such as Pope alone could write.

Swift, to whom Pope dedicated the *Dunciad*, in the well-known lines —

> "Oh! thou, whatever title please thine ear,
> Dean, Drapier, Bickerstaff, or Gulliver;
> Whether thou choose Cervantes' serious air,
> Or laugh and shake in Rabelais' easy chair;
> Or praise the court, or magnify mankind,
> Or thy grieved country's copper chains unbind,"—

was a copious writer in verse no less than in prose. His poems extend to nearly twice the length of those of Thomson, and consist of Odes, Epistles, Epigrams, Songs, Satires, and Epitaphs, besides the poem entitled *Cadenus*

and Vanessa. There is much that is objectionable in them, both in matter and form: in matter, because they exemplify, more signally than even the prose writings, the grossness which disfigured this powerful mind; in form, because most of them are in octo-syllabic verse—a metre which it is very difficult to keep from degenerating into a jingling doggrel, even if the greatest pains be taken—pains which Swift did not take.

James Thomson, the author of the *Seasons*, was the son of a Scotch Presbyterian minister. Showing a bias to literature, he was advised to repair to the great stage of London, "a place too wide for the operation of petty competition and private malignity, where merit might soon become conspicuous, and would find friends as soon as it became reputable to befriend it."* The proceeds of the sale of *Winter* were all that he had to depend upon for some time after his arrival in the metropolis. By degrees he acquired a reputation, and a fair share of patronage, from which only his invincible laziness prevented him from reaping greater benefit. Pope countenanced his tragedy of *Agamemnon* by coming to it the first night, and expressed his personal regard for him in a poetical epistle. Besides the *Seasons*, he wrote *Liberty* — a tedious, high-flown production, which no one read, even at its first appearance; *Britannia*, an attack on Sir Robert Walpole's government; and *The Castle of Indolence.* After Walpole's downfall, he obtained a sinecure place through the influence of his friend Lyttelton, but did not long enjoy it, dying, after a short illness, in 1748.

Matthew Prior, a native of Dorsetshire, from an obscure origin, rose to considerable eminence, both literary and political. In early life he was a Whig, and first came into notice as the author, jointly with Charles Montague, of

* Johnson.

the *City Mouse and Country Mouse.* In 1701 he ratted to the Tories, and made himself so useful to the party as to be selected to manage several delicate negotiations with foreign powers, in particular that which resulted in the Treaty of Utrecht. His behaviour on this occasion exposed him, though it would appear unjustly, to heavy charges from the Whig ministry, which came into power in 1714, and he was thrown into prison and kept there for more than two years. His old associates probably considered him as a renegade, and dealt out to him an unusual measure of severity. His works consist of tales, love-verses, occasional pieces, and two long poems called *Alma* and *Solomon.* Of *Alma*, a satire, Pope said that it was the only piece of Prior's composition of which he should wish to be the author. *Solomon* is a tedious didactic poem, in heroic verse.

Of "well-natured Garth," author of the mock-heroic poem, the *Dispensary*, the idea of which he took from Boileau's *Lutrin*, we can only say that he was a physician, and a staunch adherent to revolution principles during the reign of Anne, for which he was rewarded with a due share of professional emolument, when his party came into power in 1714. He was an original member of the Kit-cat Club, "generally mentioned as a set of wits, in reality, the patriots that saved Britain."* Sir Richard Blackmore was another patriotic poet. He was the city physician, and was knighted by King William. He wrote four long epic poems, the best of which, *Prince Arthur*, is below mediocrity, while the three others, *King Arthur*, *King Alfred*, and *Eliza*, are simply unreadable. His chief claim to notice is that he became a butt for the satire both of Dryden and Pope. Tickell, already mentioned as the protégé of Addison, wrote the well-known *Elegy* upon his friend, and several minor pieces. Glover, author of the

* Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting.*

short and spirited epic, *Leonidas*, and of the noble ballad of *Hosier's Ghost*, devoted his thoughts, in middle life, to questions of trade and finance; otherwise, the great exploits of the Seven Years' War might not have remained uncelebrated. Isaac Watts, author of the well-known collection of hymns for children, was a dissenting minister, who, having fallen into weak health, resided, during the last thirty-six years of his life, in the house of Sir Thomas Abney, at Stoke Newington, where he died in 1748.

The Drama, 1700—1745: — Addison, Rowe, &c. Prose Comedy: — Farquhar, Vanbrugh, &c.; The Beggars' Opera.

Since the appearance of Congreve's *Mourning Bride*, a tragedy of the old school, no tragic work had been produced deserving of mention up to the year 1713. By that time the classic drama of France, the masterpieces of Corneille and Racine, had become thoroughly known and appreciated in England; and, in the absence of any native writers of great original power, it was natural that our dramatists, both in tragedy and comedy, should model their plays upon the French pattern. This is the case with Addison's celebrated tragedy of *Cato*. It was conceived and partly written, according to Cibber*, in the year 1703; but Addison had laid it aside, and only brought it on the stage in 1713, at the urgent request of his political associates. *Cato* is in form a strictly classic play; the unities are observed and all admixture of comic matter is avoided, as carefully as in any play of Racine's. The brilliant prologue was written by Pope. The play met with signal success, because it was applauded by both political parties, the Whigs cheering the frequent allusions to liberty and patriotism, the Tories echoing back the

* Cibber's *Apology*.

cheers, because they did not choose to be thought more friendly to tyranny than their opponents.

Rowe produced several tolerable tragedies, one of which, the *Fair Penitent*, is a re-cast of Massinger's *Fatal Dowry*. His *Jane Shore* is an attempt to write a tragedy in the manner of Shakespeare. Thomson, the author of the *Seasons*, wrote the tragedy of *Sophonisba*, in the style of *Cato*. The success of this play is said to have been marred by a ridiculous circumstance. There is an absurdly flat line,

"Oh Sophonisba! Sophonisba, O!"

at the recital of which a wag in the pit called out

"Oh Jemmy Thomson! Jemmy Thomson, O!"

The parody was for some days in everyone's mouth, and made the continued representation of the play impossible. Young, the author of the *Night Thoughts*, wrote several tragedies, among which *Revenge*, produced in 1721, still keeps possession of the stage.

The comedy of manners, in prose, of which the first suggestion clearly came from the admirable works of Molière, had been successfully tried, as we have seen, by Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve, in the preceding period. To the same school of writers belonged, in this period, Farquhar, Vanbrugh, and Cibber. Farquhar, a native of Londonderry, is the author of *Sir Harry Wildair* and *The Beaux' Stratagem*, the latter written on the bed of sickness to which neglect and want had brought him, and from which he sank into an untimely grave, in his thirtieth year. Sir John Vanbrugh wrote the famous comedies of *The Provoked Wife* and *The Provoked Husband*, the latter of which was afterwards enlarged and improved by Cibber. Colley Cibber, a German by extraction, was not only a dramatist, but an actor and theatrical manager. He has left us, in the *Apology for his own Life*, published in 1740,

an amusing account of his own bustling, frivolous life, as well as of the state of the stage from the Restoration down to his own time, adding life-like sketches of the principal actors and actresses. Mrs. Centlivre produced a number of comedies in the same period, which commanded a temporary popularity.

In the work of Cibber, just mentioned, there is a complaint that the continental taste for opera had lately extended to England, to the detriment of the legitimate drama. Gay's *Beggars' Opera* was a clever attempt to gratify this taste by an operatic production truly British in every sense. The subject is the unhappy loves of Capt. Macheath, the chief of a gang of highwaymen, and Polly Peachum, the daughter of a worthy who combines the functions of thief-taker and receiver of stolen goods. The attractiveness of the piece was greatly enhanced by the introduction of a number of beautiful popular airs; indeed, but for these, the coarseness of the plot and the grossness of much of the language would have, ere now, condemned it, in spite of all its wit and drollery. There is no recitative, as in a modern opera; its place is supplied by colloquial prose. The opera was first produced, with enormous applause, in 1727.

Learning, 1700—1745: — Bentley, Lardner.

The greatest of English scholars flourished at the same time with Pope and Swift, and fell under the satire of both. Richard Bentley was a native of Yorkshire, and received his education at Cambridge, where he rose to be Master of Trinity College in 1700. The famous controversy between him and Boyle on the Epistles of Phalaris occurred in the last years of the seventeenth century, but we delayed to notice it until we could present a general view of Bentley's literary career. The dispute arose in

this way:— Sir William Temple, taking up the discussion which had been carried on between Boileau and Perrault on the comparative merits of ancient and modern authors, sided with Boileau against the moderns, and, amongst other things, adduced the Epistles of Phalaris (which he supposed to be the genuine production of the tyrant of Agrigentum, who roasted Perillus in a brazen bull), as an instance of a work which, in its kind, was unapproached by any modern writer. Dr. Aldrich, author of the well-known Treatise on Logic, who was then Dean of Christ-Church, was induced, by Temple's praise, to determine upon preparing a new edition of the Epistles for the press. He committed this task to young Charles Boyle, great nephew of the celebrated natural philosopher, Robert Boyle. A MS. in the King's Library, of which Bentley was then librarian, had to be consulted. Bentley, though he lent the MS., is said to have behaved ungraciously in the matter, and refused sufficient time for its collation. In the preface to his edition of the Epistles, which appeared in 1695, Boyle complained of the alleged discourtesy. Bentley then examined the Epistles carefully; and the result was that when Wotton, in reply to Temple, published his *Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning*, a dissertation was appended to the work, in which Bentley demonstrated that the Epistles could not possibly be the work of Phalaris, but were the forgery of a later age. In proving his point he was lavish of the supercilious and contemptuous language to which his arrogant temper naturally impelled him. Nettled at this sharp attack, the Oxford scholars clubbed their wits and their learning together; Atterbury, Smallridge, and Friend, had each a hand in the composition of the reply, which, published still under the name of Boyle, was expected to establish Phalaris in the authorship of the Epistles, and to cover Bentley with confusion. For a long time the great critic was silent; he was supposed to be vanquished, and to feel that

he was so. But in 1699 appeared the *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris*, the most profound monument of erudite criticism that has ever proceeded from an English pen. By an analysis of the language of the Epistles, Bentley proved that they were written, not in Sicilian, but in Attic, Greek, and that of a period many centuries later than the age of Phalaris; while, by bringing to bear his intimate knowledge of the whole range of Greek literature upon various topographical and historical statements which they contained, he demonstrated that towns were named which were not built, and events alluded to which had not occurred, in the life-time of their reputed author. The controversy was now at an end; his opponents promised a reply, but it was never forthcoming.

Bentley, however, with all his wit and penetration, was without that realising power of imagination, which the greatest German critics of our days, such as the brothers Grimm, have united to the former qualities; he was an acute, but not a genial critic. His edition of the *Paradise Lost*, published in 1732, is an astonishing production. Pope's lines upon it, in the *Dunciad*—

> "Not that I'd tear all beauties from his book,
> Like slashing Bentley, with his desperate hook,"

are not too severe. Among his other works are, editions of Horace and Terence, to the latter of which is prefixed a valuable dissertation on the Terentian metres.

Nathaniel Lardner, a dissenting divine, published, between 1730 and 1757, a bulky work, the fruit of great learning and painstaking research, entitled the *Credibility of the Gospel History*. Lardner was himself an Arian, but his book furnished Paley afterwards with the materials for his popular *View of the Evidences of Christianity*.

Prose Fiction, Oratory, Pamphlets, Miscellanies, 1700—1745:—Swift, Defoe, Steele, Addison.

Under the first head we have Swift's satirical romance, the *Travels of Lemuel Gulliver*, including the Voyages to Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa, and the country of the Houyhnhnms. The first sketch of the work occurs in *Martinus Scriblerus*, the joint production of Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot. But Swift soon took the sole execution of the idea into his own hands, and renouncing personal satire, to which Pope was so much addicted, made this extraordinary work the vehicle for his generalising contempt and hatred of mankind. This tone of mind, as Scott observes, gains upon the author as he proceeds, until, in the Voyage to the Houyhnhnms, he can only depict his fellow-men under the degrading and disgusting lineaments of the Yahoos. The True History of Lucian and Rabelais' Voyage of Pantagruel furnished Swift with a few suggestions, but, in the main, this is a purely original work.

Internal peace and security, prolonged through many years, while enormously augmenting the national wealth, occasioned the rise, about the middle of the present period, of that large class of readers to whom so much of modern literature is addressed — persons having leisure to read, and money to buy books, but who demand from literature rather amusement than instruction, and care less for being excited to think than for being made to enjoy. The stage, especially after Jeremy Collier's attacks upon it, became ever less competent to satisfy the wants of this class, or gratify this new kind of intellectual appetite. The periodical miscellany, the rise of which will be described presently, was the first kind of provision made for this purpose. When Addison and his numerous imitators had written themselves out, and the style had become tiresome, a new and more permanent provision arose in the modern

novel. The first of the English novelists was Daniel Defoe, born in 1661. After a long and busy career as a political writer, he was verging on his sixtieth year, when, as a sort of relaxation from his serious labours, he tried his hand at prose fiction. The *Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe,* founded on the true story of Alexander Selkirk, a sailor cast by a shipwreck on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez, appeared in 1719. It was followed by *Religious Courtship,* the *History of Colonel Jack,* the *Memoirs of a Cavalier,* &c. It was Defoe's humour to throw the utmost possible air of reality over every one of his fictions, so as to palm it off on the reader as a narrative of facts. Thus the famous physician, Dr. Mead, is said to have been taken in by the pretended *Journal of the Great Plague,* and Lord Chatham to have recommended the *Memoirs of a Cavalier* as the best authentic account of the civil war.

No oratory worthy of notice dates from this period. On the other hand, pamphleteers and political satirists abounded. On the Whig side, Defoe was so keenly ironical, that his banter was mistaken for serious argument, and led to his being lodged in the pillory for writing the *Shortest Method with the Dissenters.* From the same cause, several of his other political writings were at the time considered libellous, and exposed him to persecution; to escape which, he, late in life, renounced political discussion, and indemnified himself for being debarred from describing the busy world of fact by creating a new world, in semblance hardly less real, out of his own prolific fancy. On the Tory side more powerful pens were engaged. No pamphlet ever produced a greater immediate effect than Swift's *Conduct of the Allies,* written in 1712, in order to persuade the nation to a peace. "It is boasted that between November and January eleven thousand were sold; a great number at that time, when we were not yet a nation of readers. To its propagation certainly no agency of power or influence

was wanting. It furnished arguments for conversation, speeches for debate, and materials for parliamentary resolutions."* This was followed by *Reflections on the Barrier Treaty*, published later in the same year, and *The Public Spirit of the Whigs*, written in answer to *Steele's Crisis*, in 1714. In all these productions Swift, who had commenced life as a Whig, writes with the usual rancour of a political renegade. Differently aimed, but equally effective, were the famous *Drapier's Letters*. The following were the circumstances which gave occasion to them:—

Since the Treaty of Limerick, in 1691, Ireland had been treated in many respects as a conquered country. This was indeed unreservedly and openly the case, so far as the Catholic population were concerned; but the Irish Protestants also were compelled to share in the national humiliation. When some enterprising men had established, about the year 1700, an Irish woollen manufacture, the commercial jealousies of England were aroused, and an act was passed, which, by prohibiting the exportation of Irish woollens to any other country but England, destroyed the rising industry. This was but one out of a number of oppressive acts under which Irishmen chafed, but in vain. Swift's haughty temper rose against the indignities offered to his country, and he only waited for an opportunity to strike a blow. That opportunity was given by the proceedings connected with Wood's contract for supplying a copper coinage, to circulate only in Ireland. Commercially speaking, it was ultimately proved that the new coinage was calculated to benefit Ireland, not to injure her. The coins were assayed at the Mint, under the superintendence of no less a person than Sir Isaac Newton, and proved to be of the proper weight and fineness. But the way in which the thing was done was, and deservedly, the cause of offence. The privilege of coining money, which had

* Johnson's *Life of Swift.*

always been considered to appertain to the royal prerogative, was, in this instance, without the consent, or even knowledge, of the Lord Lieutenant or the Irish Privy Council, delegated to an obscure Englishman, who had obtained the preference over other competitors by paying court to the king's mistress. It was this heaping of insult upon injury which excited the ferment in the Irish mind, of which the memorable Drapier availed himself. The first letter appeared some time in the year 1724. In it and the two following letters Swift artfully confined himself to those objections and accusations which were open to the perception of all classes of the people. He declared that the new coins were of base metal; — he pulled Wood's character to pieces; — he asserted that the inevitable consequence of the introduction of the new coinage would be the disappearance of all the gold and silver from Ireland. Such charges as these came home to the feelings and understanding of the lowest and most ignorant of his readers, and the excitement which they caused was tremendous. In the fourth and following letters Swift followed up the attack by opening up the general question of the wrongs and humiliations which Ireland had to suffer from England. A proclamation was vainly issued by the Irish Government, offering a reward of 300*l.* to any one who would disclose the author of the Drapier's fourth letter. The danger was great, but Sir Robert Walpole was equal to the occasion. He first tried a compromise, but without success, and then wisely cancelled the obnoxious contract. From this period to his death Swift was the idol of the Irish people. He said once to a Protestant dignitary, in the course of an altercation, "If I were but to hold up my little finger, the mob would tear you to pieces."

Arbuthnot, the joint author, with Pope and Swift, of *Martinus Scriblerus*, of whom Pope spoke as his "guide, philosopher, and friend," and Swift exclaimed, "Oh, if the world had a dozen Arbuthnots, I would burn my

[Gulliver's] Travels!"—wrote, about the year 1709, the telling political satire, named the *History of John Bull*, levelled against the Godolphin ministry.

From this period dates the rise of the periodical miscellany.* To Richard Steele, an Irishman, who was employed by the Whig Government to write the *Gazette* during the Spanish succession war, the nature of his employment seems to have suggested the design of the *Tatler*. To this periodical Addison soon began to contribute papers, and continued to write for it nearly to the end. The first number appeared on the 22nd April, 1709, the last on the 2nd January, 1711; three numbers were issued weekly. The *Tatler* succeeded so well, that its conductors soon followed it up with the more celebrated *Spectator*, to which Addison was the chief contributor. A number came out every morning (except Sundays); the first was published in March, 1711, the last on the 6th December, 1712. "The *Tatler* and *Spectator*," says Johnson, "were published at a time when two parties, loud, restless, and violent, each with plausible declarations, and each, perhaps, without any distinct termination of its views, were agitating the nation. To minds heated with political contest, they supplied cooler and more inoffensive reflections; and it is said by Addison, in a subsequent work, that they had a perceptible influence upon the conversation of that time, and taught the frolic and the gay to unite merriment with decency—an effect which they can never wholly lose while they continue to be among the first books by which both sexes are initiated in the elegancies of knowledge." "These works," he proceeds, "adjusted, like Casa†, the unsettled practice of daily intercourse by propriety and politeness;

* Usually, but not very correctly, called the periodical essay; a word which can hardly be stretched so as to include the allegories, sketches of manners and characters, tales, gossiping letters, &c., with which the *Tatler* and *Spectator* abound.

† Author of *Galateo, or the Art of Living in the World.* Died in 1556.

and, like La Bruyère, exhibited the characters and manners of the age. The personages introduced in these papers were not merely ideal; they were then known, and conspicuous in various stations."

In 1713, another daily paper, called the *Guardian*, to which Addison gave great assistance, was published by Steele. "The papers of Addison are marked in the *Spectator* by one of the letters in the name of Clio, and in the *Guardian* by a hand." In 1714, the *Spectator* was resumed and carried on for about six months, at the rate of three papers a week. Of the eighty numbers published, Tickell has ascribed to Addison twenty-three. These additional numbers were afterwards collected into an eighth volume, which is, perhaps, more valuable than any of those that went before it. At the end of 1715 Addison commenced writing the *Freeholder*, at the rate of two papers a week, and continued it till the middle of the next year. "This was undertaken in defence of the established Government; sometimes with argument, sometimes with mirth. In argument, he had many equals; but his humour was singular and matchless. Bigotry itself must be delighted with the Tory fox-hunter." *

Works of Satire and Humour: — Swift.

It will be remembered † that Swift's patron, Sir William Temple, took a leading part in the discussion upon the relative merits of ancient and modern authors. Swift himself struck in on the same side, in the brilliant satire of the *Battle of the Books*, which was written in 1697, but not published till 1704. In this controversy the great wits, both in France and England, were all of one mind in claiming the palm for the ancients. It was, perhaps, with

* Johnson. † See p. 172.

some reference to it that Pope, in the *Essay on Criticism*, burst forth into the magnificent encomium in honour of the great poets of antiquity, beginning,

"Still green with bays each ancient altar stands," &c.

In the reaction towards the mediæval and Gothic antiquity, which marked the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, this enthusiasm for Greece and Rome was much abated. At present, there are symptoms of a partial revival of the feeling.

The *Tale of a Tub* was also published in 1704, though written in 1696. The title is explained by Swift to mean, that, as sailors throw out a tub to a whale, to keep him amused, and prevent him from running foul of their ship, so, in this treatise, his object is to afford such temporary diversion to the wits and free-thinkers of the day (who drew their arguments from the *Leviathan* of Hobbes) as may restrain them from injuring the State by propagating wild theories in religion and politics. The allegory of the three brothers, and the general character and tendency of this extraordinary book, will be examined in the second part of the present work.

History, 1700—1745:—Burnet, Rapin.

Burnet's *History of his Own Times*, closing with the year 1713, was published soon after his death in 1715. Burnet was a Scotchman, and a very decided Whig. Exiled by James II., he attached himself to the Prince of Orange, and was actively engaged in all the intrigues which paved the way for the Revolution. His character has been ably drawn by Macaulay in his *History of England*. William rewarded his services by appointing him bishop of Salisbury. He was a copious but a careless writer. A passage in his *History of the Reformation of*

the Church of England, the last volume of which appeared in 1715, brought him into collision — impar congressus Achilli — with the great Bossuet. The *History of his Own Times*, though ill arranged and inaccurate, is yet, owing to its contemporary character, a valuable original source of information for the period between the Restoration and 1713. Rapin, a French refugee, published in 1725 the best complete history of England that had as yet appeared. It was translated twice, and long remained a standard work.

Of the theology and philosophy of the period we reserve our sketch till after we have examined the progress of general literature between 1745 and 1800.

Johnson. Poetry, 1745—1800: — Gray, Cowper, Burns, &c.

The grand yet grotesque figure of Samuel Johnson holds the central place among the writers of the second half of the eighteenth century. In all literary réunions he took the undisputed lead, by the power and brilliancy of his conversation, which, indeed, as recorded by Boswell, is a more valuable possession than any, or all, of his published works. His influence upon England was eminently conservative; his manly good sense, his moral courage, his wit, readiness, and force as a disputant, were all exerted to keep English society where it was, and prevent the ideas of Voltaire and Rosseau from gaining ground. His success was signal. Not that there were wanting on the other side either gifted minds, or an impressible audience; Hume, Gibbon, and Priestley were sceptics of no mean order of ability; and Boswell's own example * shows that, had there been no counteracting force at work, an enthusiastic admiration for Rousseau might easily have become fashionable in England. But while Johnson lived

* See Hume's *Autobiography*.

and talked, the sophistry of the infidel and revolutionary party was continually foiled and shamed. After his death the writings of Burke carried on the sort of conservative propaganda which he had initiated.

Johnson was born at Lichfield, in the year 1709. His father was a native of Derbyshire, but had settled in Lichfield as a bookseller. After having received the rudiments of a classical education at various country schools, he was entered at Pembroke College, Oxford, in the year 1728. His father about this time suffered heavy losses in business, in consequence of which Johnson had to struggle for many years against the deepest poverty. Nor were either his mental or bodily constitution so healthful and vigorous as to compensate for the frowns of fortune. He seems to have inherited from his mother's family the disease of scrofula, or the king's evil, for which he was taken up to London, at the age of three years, to be touched by Queen Anne — the ancient superstition concerning the efficacy of the royal touch not having then wholly died out. His mind was a prey during life to that most mysterious malady, hypochondria, which exhibited itself in a morbid melancholy, varying at different times in intensity, but never completely shaken off — and also in an incessant haunting fear of insanity. Under the complicated miseries of his condition, religion, such as he knew it, sustained him, and deserted him not, till, at the age of seventy-five, full of years and honours, his much-tried and long-suffering soul was released. In his boyhood, he tells us he had got into a habit of wandering about the fields reading, on Sundays, instead of going to church, and the religious lessons early taught him by his mother were considerably effaced; but at Oxford, the work of that excellent man, though somewhat cloudy writer, William Law, entitled *A Serious Call to a Holy Life*, fell into his hands, and made so profound an impression upon him, that, from that time forward, though he

used to lament the shortcomings in his practice, religion was ever, in the main, the actuating principle of his life.

After leaving Oxford, he held a situation as under-master in a grammar-school for some months. But this was a kind of work for which he was utterly unfitted, and he was compelled to give it up. He went to Birmingham, where he obtained some trifling literary work. In 1735 he married a Mrs. Porter, a widow, and soon after, as a means of subsistence, opened a boarding school, in which, however, he failed. He now resolved to try his fortune in London. He settled there with his wife in 1737, and supported himself for many years by writing — principally by his contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which had been established by Cave about the year 1730, and is still carried on. His Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language was published in 1747. The price stipulated for from the booksellers was 1,575*l.*, and the work was to be completed in three years. The *Rambler*, a series of papers on miscellaneous subjects, on the model of the *Spectator*, was commenced by him in 1750, and concluded in 1752. This and various other works, which appeared from time to time, joined to his unrivalled excellence as a talker, which made his company eagerly sought after by persons of all ranks, gradually won for Johnson a considerable reputation; and, after the accession of George III., he received, through the kindness of Lord Bute, a pension of 300*l.* a year. This was in 1762. He continued to reside in London—with but short intervals, on the occasions of his tours to the Hebrides, to Wales, and to France — till his death in 1784.

Johnson's works — excepting the *Dictionary*, a tragedy called *Irene*, a few poems, the *Lives of the Poets*, and a short novel, the famous *Rasselas* — consist of essays very multifarious in their scope, discussing questions of politics, manners, trade, agriculture, art, and criticism. The bulk of these were composed for the *Rambler*, the *Idler*, and

the *Adventurer*. His prose style, cumbrous, antithetical, and pompous, yet in his hands possessing generally great dignity and strength, and sometimes even, as in *Rasselas*, rising to remarkable beauty and nobleness, was so influential upon the men of his day that it caused a complete revolution, for a time, in English style, and by no means for the better; since inferior men, though they could easily appropriate its peculiarities or defects — its long words, its balanced clauses, its laboured antitheses — could not with equal ease emulate its excellences.

Among Johnson's poems, the satire called *London*, an imitation of the tenth satire of Juvenal, and the beautiful didactic poem on *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, are the most deserving of notice.

Gray, the son of a scrivener of London, was educated and lived the greater part of his life at Cambridge. In the small volume of his poems there are several pieces which have gained a permanent place in our literature. As a writer, he was indolent and fastidious; to the former quality we probably owe it that his writings are so few, to the latter that many of them are so excellent. The famous *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* was first published in a magazine in 1750.

Churchill, a bold and reckless satirist, was, in his day — so fallacious often are contemporary judgments — ranked with Pope and Dryden! After leaving Cambridge he took orders, but soon after threw off the gown, and commenced a life of riotous profligacy, which was closed by his early death at the age of thirty-three. Among his poems is an Epistle to Hogarth, occasioned by a caricature from that inimitable pencil, representing Churchill as a bear, in full canonicals, drinking a pot of porter. His personal satires, levelled against politicians, actors, artists, and Scotchmen, were eagerly read and enjoyed by the public of his day.

Collins, the author of the *Odes to the Passions*, Shenstone*, Akenside†, and Mason‡, wrote about the middle of the century. But it was essentially a prosaic period. Young, who lived to a great age, and whose *Night Thoughts* began to appear in 1742, wrote his poem of *Resignation* in 1762, when he was past eighty. He has been eulogised as a "Christian philosopher;" but his character had in it no trace of self-denial or nobleness. In his forty-eighth year he took orders with an eye to preferment; nor did Dryden, in a more servile age, ever offer falser or more fulsome adulation to the Stuart kings than Young, in his *Odes*, lavishes upon George II.

Next to Johnson and Burke, no name stands higher on the list of writers who flourished between 1750 and 1780 than that of Oliver Goldsmith. His earliest poem, the *Traveller*, is, both in form and tone, much in the manner of Pope, whose influence, indeed, over all the poets of the century, excepting Burns, is abundantly evident. Goldsmith gradually perfected a manner of his own, which, though not of the highest order, gives to his few poems the inimitable grace of nature and stamp of originality. The *Deserted Village*, which appeared in 1770, contains the well-known and oft-quoted lines, beginning —

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey," &c.

The gentle heart and refined feeling of the unhappy Cowper enriched our literature with much beautiful and pathetic poetry. Of a noble family, he was nominated, after a few years vainly spent in studying for the bar, to a clerkship in the House of Lords; but, having to face the ordeal of a personal appearance before the House, previously to entering upon his duties, he was overcome by

* Author of the *Schoolmistress*, the *Pastoral Ballad*, &c.

† Author of the *Pleasures of Imagination*.

‡ Author of *Isis*, *Elfrida*, and *Caractacus*, and minor poems.

nervous terror at the prospect, and actually attempted suicide! The appointment was of course given up; and, after recovering from the temporary derangement that his mind had suffered, Cowper sought that life of retirement and seclusion, which he never afterwards quitted. His first poems were not published till 1782, when he was past fifty — having been written rather to divert his mind from preying upon itself, than from the imperious impulse of nature, or the desire of fame. This volume contained *Table Talk*, *Truth*, the *Progress of Error*, &c.; and its contents are marked generally by a tone of earnest protest against the infidelity which the school of Voltaire threatened to render popular. In 1785 appeared a second volume, containing *Tirocinium*, the *Task*, *John Gilpin* (which had been published separately two years before), the *Sofa*, &c. The translation of Homer's *Iliad* in blank verse appeared in 1791. Among Cowper's few intimate friends was the Reverend John Newton. This excellent man was, unfortunately, a rigid Calvinist, and his gloomy predestinarianism took such a hold on the unsteady mind of Cowper, that, imagining himself doomed to everlasting perdition, he fell into a state of religious melancholy bordering on madness, which clouded his reason during the last ten years of his life. His exquisite poem of *The Castaway* was written within a year before his death, which occurred in April, 1800.

In Scotland, where no truly original poet had arisen since Dunbar, the last forty years of the century witnessed the bright and brief career of the peasant poet, whose genius shed a dazzling glow over his country's literature. Many beautiful songs*, mostly of unknown authorship, circulated in Scotland before the time of Burns, some of which may be found in Percy's *Reliques*. With this foun-

* For an interesting account of them, see an article by J. C. Shairp in *Macmillan's Magazine* for May, 1861.

dation to work upon — with the education of a Scottish primary school, a knowledge of Pope and Shenstone, and a sound, clear intellect, — Burns made himself the greatest song-writer that our literature has ever known. Force pervaded his whole character; he could do nothing by halves. At the age of eighteen, that passion, from which proceed so much alike of the glory and of the shame of man's existence, developed itself in his burning heart, and remained till death the chief motive power of his thoughts and acts. He fell in love; and then his feelings, as he tells us, spontaneously burst forth in song. Two other strongly-marked tendencies in his character must be mentioned, to which some of his most famous productions may be attributed. The first was his ardent spirit of nationality; the second, his repugnance to, and revolt from, the narrow sectarianism of his age and country. Almost the first book he ever read was the life of Sir William Wallace, the Scottish patriot, whose hiding-places and ambushes, as pointed out by history or local tradition, he visited with a pilgrim's fervour. It was this spirit which produced such poems as —

"Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,"

or the *Address to the Scottish Members of Parliament.* His repugnance to Presbyterianism redounds partly to the disgrace of the system which he satirized, and partly to his own. If he rebelled against the ceremonial and formal, he rebelled no less against the *moral* teaching of Presbyterianism. His protest against religious hypocrisy must be taken in connection with his own licentiousness. His father, an earnest adherent of that creed and system which the son broke away from and despised, though wrestling all his life against poverty and misfortune, endured his troubles with patience, and died in peace, because he had learned the secret of the victory over self. His wondrously gifted son never gained that victory, and the

record of his last years presents one of the most sad, disastrous spectacles that it is possible to contemplate.

Burns' first volume of poems was published in 1786, and a second edition appeared in the following year. After his marriage to Jean Armour, he settled on the farm of Ellisland, uniting the functions of an exciseman to those of a farmer. But the farm proved a bad speculation —

"Spem mentita seges, bos est enectus arando,"

and, having received a more lucrative appointment in the excise, Burns gave up Ellisland and removed to Dumfries. Here the habit of intemperance, to indulgence in which the nature of his employment unhappily supplied more than ordinary temptations, gradually made him its slave; disappointment and self-reproach preyed upon his heart; want stared him in the face; and the greatest of Scottish poets, having become a mere wreck of his former self, sank, in his thirty-seventh year, into an untimely grave.

The Drama, 1745—1800: — Home, Johnson, Goldsmith, Sheridan.

The tragic stage resumed in this period, under the able management of Garrick, a portion of its former dignity. But no orginal tragedies of importance were composed. Home's play of *Douglas*, known to all school-boys as the source of that familiar burst of eloquence, beginning —

"My name is Norval, on the Grampian hills
My father feeds his flocks," &c., &c.

appeared in 1757. Johnson's tragedy of *Irene*, produced at Drury Lane by Garrick in 1749, was coldly received, owing to the want of sustained tragic interest. When asked how he felt upon the ill success of his tragedy, the

sturdy lexicographer replied, "Like the Monument." When we have mentioned Moore's *Gamester* (1755) and Mason's *Caractacus* (1759) our list of tragedies of any note is exhausted.

The comedy of manners, as exemplified by the plays of Congreve and Farquhar, had gradually degenerated into the genteel or sentimental comedy, in which Colman the elder and Arthur Murphy were proficients. Goldsmith's *Good-Natured Man* (1768) was a clever attempt to bring back the theatrical public to the old way of thinking, which demanded "little more than nature and humour, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous." Delineation of character was therefore his principal aim. *She Stoops to Conquer*, a piece written on the same plan, appeared, and had a great run, in 1773. Foote, the actor, wrote several clever farces between 1752 and 1778.

But the comic genius of Sheridan far outshone all his competitors. This too brilliant and ready-witted man was born at Dublin, and married the beautiful actress, Miss Linley. His life has been well written by Moore. His admirable prose comedies, the *Rivals*, the *Duenna*, the *School for Scandal*, and the *Critic*, were all written between 1775 and 1780. For pure, sparkling, never-failing wit, our dramatic literature contains nothing comparable to these pieces. Their versatile author, to whom Dryden's character of the second Duke of Buckingham —

> "A man so various, that he seem'd to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome,"

might not unfitly be applied, died, like Buckingham, an utter wreck, both in body and mind, in the year 1817.

Learning, 1745—1800: — Porson, Lowth.

The progress of classical and oriental learning owed little to England during this period. The one great name

that occurs (Edward Gibbon) will be mentioned when we come to speak of the historians. Sloth and ease reigned at the Universities; and those great foundations, which in the hands of monks and churchmen in former times had never wholly ceased to minister to learning and philosophy, were now the mere haunts of port-drinking fellows, and lazy, mercenary tutors.* Porson, the delicacy of whose Greek scholarship almost amounted to a sense, and who admirably edited several of the plays of Euripides — Bishop Lowth, author of the *Prælectiones* on Hebrew Poetry, and of a translation of Isaias, and Pococke, the Arabic scholar — are the only learned writers whose works are still of value.

Prose Fiction, 1745—1800: — Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Goldsmith; Miss Burney, Mrs. Radcliffe.

Favoured, in the manner before explained, by the continued stability of society, the taste for novels grew from year to year, and was gratified during this period by an abundant supply of fiction. Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne, worked on at the mine which Defoe had opened. Richardson, who was brought up as a printer, produced his first novel, *Pamela*, in 1740. A natural and almost accidental train of circumstances led to his writing it. He had agreed to compose a collection of specimen letters — a polite letter-writer, in fact — for two booksellers; and it occurred to him, while engaged in this task, that the work would be greatly enlivened if the letters were connected by a thread of narrative. The bookseller applauded the notion, and he accordingly worked up the true story of a young woman — the Pamela of the novel — which had come to his knowledge a few years before. Henry Fielding, sprung from a

* See Gibbon's *Memoirs*.

younger branch of the noble house of Denbigh, wrote his first novel — *Joseph Andrews* — in 1742, to turn *Pamela* into ridicule. Richardson's masterpieces, *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, appeared successively in 1748 and 1753; Fielding's *Tom Jones* and *Amelia* in 1749 and 1751. Smollett, a Scotchman, wrote, between 1748 and 1771, a number of coarse clever novels upon the same general plan as those of his English contemporaries; that is, on the plan of "holding the mirror up to Nature," and showing to the age its own likeness without flattery or disguise. The best are *Roderick Random* and *Humphrey Clinker*. But Richardson wrote always with a moral purpose, which the other two had not, though that does not hinder much that he wrote from being of an objectionable tendency.

In Sterne, humour is carried to its farthest point. His novel of *Tristram Shandy* is like no other novel ever written: it has no interest of plot or of incident; its merit and value lie partly in the humour with which the characters are drawn and contrasted, partly in that other kind of humour which displays itself in unexpected transitions, and curious trains of thought. The first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* appeared in 1759. The character and life of Sterne have been admirably portrayed by Thackeray, in his Lectures on the English Humorists.

Johnson's tale of *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*, appeared in 1759. In Lord Brougham's *Life of Voltaire*, Johnson is reported to have said that, had he seen Voltaire's *Candide*, which appeared shortly before, he should not have written *Rasselas*, because both works travel nearly over the same ground. Nothing, however, can be more different than the tone and spirit of the tales. Each writer rejects the optimism of Leibnitz, and pictures a world full of evil and misery; but the Frenchman founds on this common basis his sneers at religion and at the doctrine of an overruling Providence, while the

Englishman represents the darkest corners of the present life as irradiated by a compensating faith in immortality, which alone can explain their existence.

Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, the book which, by its picturesque presentation of the manners and feelings of simple people, first led Goethe to turn with interest to the study of English literature, was published in 1766. The *Man of Feeling*, by Henry Mackenzie, appeared in 1771. Its author, who wrote it while under the potent spell of Sterne's humour, and the attraction of Johnson's style, lived far on into the nineteenth century, and learned to feel and confess the superior power of the author of Waverley. The *Man of the World* and *Julia de Roubigné* are later works, by the same hand. Frances Burney created a sensation by her novel of *Evelina*, published in 1778, "the best work of fiction that had appeared since the death of Smollett." * It was followed by *Cecilia* (1782), and — at a long interval, both of time and merit — by *Camilla*, in 1796.

Between the works just mentioned and the writings of Godwin, there is a gulf interposed, such as marks the transition from one epoch of world-history to another. Instead of the moralizing, the sketches of manners, and delineations of character, on which the novelists of this age had till then employed their powers, we meet with impassioned or argumentative attacks upon society itelf, as if it were so fatally disordered as to require reconstruction from top to bottom. The design of *Caleb Williams*, published in 1794, is to represent English society as so iniquitously constituted as to enable a man of wealth and position to trample with impunity upon the rights of his inferiors, and, though himself a criminal of the darkest dye, to brave the accusations of his poor and unfriended opponent, and succeed in fixing upon him, though innocent, the brand of guilt. Besides *Caleb Williams*

* Macaulay's *Essays*.

Godwin wrote the strange romance of *St. Leon*, the hero of which has found the elixir vitæ, and describes the descent of his undecaying life from century to century. About the close of the period, Mrs. Radcliffe wrote the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and the *Romance of the Forest* — two thrilling romances of the Kotzebue school, in which stirring and terrible events succeed each other so rapidly, that the reader is, or ought to be, kept in a whirl of horror and excitement from the beginning to the end. Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* was meant as a satire upon novels of this class; though, as he relates with great enjoyment, numberless simple-minded novel-readers took it for a serious production of the romantic school.

Oratory, 1745—1800: — Chatham, Burke, Sheridan, &c.

This is the great age of English eloquence. Perhaps no country in the world ever possessed at one time such a group of orators as that whose voices were heard in Parliament and in Westminster Hall during these fifty years. Chatham, Burke, Fox, Erskine, Pitt, Sheridan, and Grattan! It seemed as if the country could not bring to maturity two kinds of imaginative genius at once; — the age of the great poets—of Milton, Dryden, and Pope — passes away before the age of the great orators begins. Our limits will only permit us to advert to a few celebrated orations. Everyone has heard of the last speech of the great Lord Chatham, in April 1778, "the expiring tones of that mighty voice when he protested against the dismemberment of this ancient monarchy, and prayed that if England must fall, she might fall with honour." * The eloquence of Burke —

> "Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
> And thought of convincing when they thought of dining,"

* Arnold's *Roman History*, vol. i.

though it often flew over the heads of those to whom it was addressed, was to be the admiration and delight of unborn generations. The speech on the conciliation of America (1775), that addressed to the electors of Bristol (1780), that on the Nabob of Arcot's debts (1785), and those delivered on the impeachment of Warren Hastings (1788), may be considered his greatest efforts. Upon a subject connected with, and leading to this impeachment—the conduct of Warren Hastings to the Begums of Oude—Sheridan delivered, in 1787, a speech which was unfortunately not reported, but which appears to have made a more profound and permanent impression upon the hearers than any speech recorded in the annals of Parliament. "Mr. Windham, twenty years later, said that the speech deserved all its fame, and was, in spite of some faults of taste, such as were seldom wanting either in the literary or the parliamentary performances of Sheridan, the finest that had been delivered within the memory of man." * Grattan during many years was the foremost among a number of distinguished orators who sat in the Irish parliament; and his fiery eloquence, exerted at a period when England lay weakened and humiliated by her failure in America, extorted for that body, in 1782, the concession of legislative independence. Pitt's speech on the India Bill in 1784, explaining and defending his proposal of the system of double government, which has been lately (1858) superseded, as well as his speeches on the Slave Trade and the Catholic Relief Bill, though not exactly eloquent, should be read as embodying the views of a great practical statesman upon subjects of deep and permanent interest. Erskine was a cadet of a noble but needy family in Scotland. He crossed the Border early in life, raised himself by his remarkable powers as an advocate to the position of Lord Chancellor, and died on

* Macaulay's Essays; article, Warren Hastings.

his way back to his native country, in his seventy-third year.

Pamphlets, Miscellanies, 1745—1800 : — Junius, Burke, Johnson.

The famous *Letters of Junius*, addressed to the *Public Advertiser*, extend over the period from the 21st January, 1769, to the 21st January, 1772. Under his impenetrable mask, the writer first attacks the different members of the ministry of the Duke of Grafton, to whom, as premier, eleven of the letters are addressed, in which the life and character, both public and private, of the minister are exposed with keen and merciless satire. The thirty-fifth letter is addressed to the King, and concludes with the well-known daring words, "The prince, who imitates their [the Stuarts'] conduct, should be warned by their example; and while he plumes himself upon the security of his title to the crown, should remember that, as it was acquired by one revolution, it may be lost by another." The mystery about the authorship, which volumes have been written to elucidate, has without doubt contributed to the fame of the Letters. The opinions, however, of the best judges have been of late years converging to a settled belief, that Sir Philip Francis, a leading opposition member in the House of Commons, was Junius; and that no other person could have been.

Johnson is the author of four pamphlets, all on the Tory side in politics. He was often taunted with writing in favour of the reigning dynasty, by which he had been pensioned, while his real sympathies lay with the house of Stuart. But his prejudices, rather than his reason, were Jacobite. He said, that if holding up his little finger would have given the victory at Culloden to Prince Charles Edward, he was not sure that he would have held it up. And he jokingly told Boswell, that "the pleasures

of cursing the house of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, were amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year." The *False Alarm* appeared in 1770;—the *Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting the Falkland Islands* (in which there is a well-known invective against Junius) in the following year. The *Patriot* came out in 1774, and *Taxation no Tyranny* in 1775. This last pamphlet was written at the desire of the incapable and obstinate ministry of Lord North, as a reply to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress. This tirade against brave men for defending their liberties in the style of their English forefathers, shows how mischievously a great mind may be blinded by the indulgence of unexamined prejudices.

The longer political writings of Burke we shall consider as contributions to political science, and treat under the head of philosophy. The remaining treatises may be divided into four classes,—as relating, 1. to general home politics, 2. to colonial affairs, 3. to French and foreign affairs, 4. to the position and claims of the Irish Catholics. Among the tracts of the first class, the *Sketch of the Negro Code* (1792), an attempt to mediate between the planters and the abolitionists, by proposing to place the slave trade under stringent regulations, and concurrently to raise the condition of the negroes in the West Indies by a series of humane measures borrowed mostly from the Spanish code, deserves special mention for its far-sighted wisdom. His tracts on American affairs were, like his speeches, on the side of conciliation and concession. Upon the subject of the French revolution he felt so keenly, that his dislike of the policy deepened into estrangement from the persons of its English sympathizers. He broke with his old friend Fox, and refused to see him even when lying on the bed of mortal sickness. The last of the four letters *On a Regicide Peace* is dated in 1797, the year of his death, and the MS. was found unfinished,

as if the composition had been arrested only by physical inability to proceed. Against the penal laws then weighing upon the Irish Catholics, he spoke and wrote with a generous pertinacity. The memory of his Catholic mother had perhaps as much to do with this as the native enlightenment and capacity of his mind. His writings on this question, in its various aspects, extend over more than thirty years of his life, from 1766 to 1797. His last *Letter on the Affairs of Ireland* was written but a few months before his death. He avows that he has not "power enough of mind or body to bring out his sentiments with their natural force," but adds — "I do not wish to have it concealed that I am of the same opinion to my last breath which I entertained when my faculties were at the best."

The commencement of the *Rambler* in March 1750, marked an attempt on the part of Johnson to revive the periodical miscellany, which had sunk into disrepute since the death of Addison. Of all the papers in the *Rambler*, from the commencement to the concluding number, dated 2nd March 1752, only three were not from the pen of Johnson. Although many single papers were admirable, the miscellany was pervaded by a certain cumbrousness and monotony, which prevented it from obtaining a popularity comparable to that of the *Spectator*. The *Adventurer* was commenced by Dr. Hawkesworth in 1753. In that and the following year Johnson furnished a few articles for it, signed with the letter T. The *Idler*, which was even less successful than the *Rambler*, was carried on during two years, from April 1758 to April 1760. All but twelve of the hundred and three articles were written by Johnson. For many years afterwards this style of writing remained unattempted.

Historians, 1745—1800:—Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Warton. Biographers:—Boswell, &c.

The best, or at any rate the best known, historical compositions in our literature, date from this period. The Scottish philosopher, David Hume, availing himself of the materials which had been collected by Carte, the author of the *Life of Ormond*, published between the years 1754 and 1762 his *History of England*. The reigns of the Stuarts were the first portion published; in the treatment of which his anti-Puritanic tone much offended the Whig party, and for some years interfered with the circulation of the book. Johnson was probably right when he said that "Hume would never have written a history had not Voltaire written it before him." For the *Siècle de Louis XIV.* appeared before 1753, and the influence of the *Essai sur les Mœurs* is clearly traceable in Hume's later volumes. William Robertson — a Scottish Presbyterian minister, who rose to be Principal of the University of Edinburgh — wrote his *History of Scotland during the Reigns of Queen Mary and King James VI.* in 1759. In 1769 appeared his *History of the Emperor Charles V.*, and in 1777 his *History of America*. As his first work had procured for Dr. Robertson a brilliant reputation in his own country, so his histories of Charles V. and of America extended his fame to foreign lands. The former was translated by M. Suard in France; the latter, after receiving the warm approbation of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid, was about to be translated into Spanish, when the government, not wishing their American administration to be brought under discussion, interfered with a prohibition.

Edward Gibbon, who was descended from an ancient family in Kent, was born in 1737. While at Oxford, he

became a Catholic from reading the works of Parsons and Bossuet. His father immediately sent him to Lausanne, to be under the care of a Calvinist minister, whose prudent management, seconded as it was by the absence of all opposing influences, in a few months effected his re-conversion to Protestantism. For the rest of his life he was a "philosopher," as the eighteenth century understood the term; in other words, a disbeliever in revealed religion. Concerning the origin of his celebrated work, he says: — "It was at Rome, on the 15th October 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind. But my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city rather than of the empire; and . . . some years elapsed . . . before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work." * The several volumes of the History appeared between 1776 and 1787. The work was translated into several languages, and Gibbon obtained by European consent a place among the historians of the first rank.

Among the minor historians of the period, the chief were Goldsmith, the author of short popular histories of Greece, Rome, and England; Russell, whose *History of Modern Europe* appeared between 1779 and 1784, and has been continued by Coote and others down to our own times; and Mitford, in whose *History of Greece*, the first volume of which was published in 1784, the Tory sentiments of the author find a vent in the continual disparagement of the Athenian democracy. Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry*, a work of great learning, and to this day of unimpaired authority, was published between 1774 and 1781. It comes down to the age of Elizabeth. If all her Professors of Poetry had so well repaid her patronage, the

* Memoirs, p 198.

literary reputation of Oxford would have been more considerable than it is.

Among works subsidiary to history, the chief were — in Biography, Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (1781), a dull Life of Pope by Ruffhead, Hume's *Autobiography*, edited by Adam Smith (1777), and Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791). The records of seafaring enterprise were enriched by the *Voyages* of the great Captain Cook (1773—1784) of Byron, and Vancouver.

Theology, 1700—1800.

The English theological literature of this century includes some remarkable works. A series of open or covert attacks upon Christianity, proceeding from the school of writers known as the English Deists, began to appear about the beginning of the century. Toland led the way with his *Christianity not Mysterious*, in 1702; and the series was closed by Bolingbroke's posthumous works, published in 1752, by which time the temper of the public mind was so much altered that Bolingbroke's scoffs at religion hardly aroused any other feelings but those of impatience and indignation. Collins, Tindal, Chubb, Wollaston, and others, took part in the anti-Christian enterprise. In order to reply to them, the Protestant divines were compelled to take different ground from that which their predecessors had chosen in the two previous centuries. Hooker, Andrewes, Laud, Taylor, and the rest of the High Church school, had based the obligation of religious belief to a large extent upon Church authority. But their opponents had replied, that if that principle were admitted, it was impossible to justify the separation from Rome. The Puritans of the old school had set up the Scriptures, as constituting by themselves an infallible religious oracle. But the notorious, important, and interminable differences of interpretation which divided the

Biblical party, had discredited this method of appeal. The Quakers and other ultra-Puritans, discarding both Church authority and the letter of Scripture, had imagined that they had found, in a certain inward spiritual illumination residing in the souls of believers, the unerring religious guide which all men desired. But the monstrous profaneness and extravagance to which this doctrine of the inward light had often conducted its adherents, had brought this expedient also into discredit. The only course left for the divines was to found the duty of accepting Christianity upon the dictates of common sense and reason. The Deists urged that the Christian doctrines were irrational; the divines met them on their own ground, and contended that, on the contrary, revelation was in itself so antecedently probable, and was supported by so many solid proofs, that it was but the part of prudence and good sense to accept it. The *reasonableness* of Christianity — the *evidences* for Christianity — the *proofs* of revelation — such was the tenor of all their replies. It has well been called a rationalizing age — Seculum Rationalisticum. Among the crowd of publications issued by the Christian apologists, there are three or four which have obtained a permanent place in general literature. The first is Bentley's *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis* (1713), written in answer to Collins' *Discourse on Free Thinking*. This is a short and masterly tract, in which the great Aristarch proved, with reference to some cavilling objections which Collins had derived from the variety of readings in the manuscripts, that the text of the New Testament was on the whole in a better and sounder state than that of any of the Greek classical authors. The second is Bishop Berkeley's *Alciphron*, published in 1732. The third is Butler's celebrated *Analogy of Religion, both Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, published in 1736. As against the Deists, the controversy was now decided. It was abundantly proved

that the fact of a revelation was, if not demonstrable, yet so exceedingly probable that no prudent mind could reject it, and that the Christian ethics were not inconsistent with, but a continuation and expansion of, natural morality. Deism accordingly fell into disrepute in England about the middle of the century. But in France the works of some of the English Deists became known through the translations of Diderot and the Encyclopædists, and doubtless co-operated with those of Voltaire in causing the outburst of irreligion which followed the Revolution of 1789.

One more of these apologetic works must be mentioned, the *Divine Legation of Moses*, by Bishop Warburton (1743). This writer, known for his arrogant temper, to whom Mallet addressed a pamphlet inscribed "To the most Impudent Man alive," was possessed of a rare combination of intellectual gifts. His friendship with Pope, whose Essay on Man he defended against the censures of Crousaz, first brought him into notice. The favour of Queen Caroline, whose discerning eye real merit or genius seldom escaped, raised him to the episcopal bench. The full title of the controversial work above mentioned is, "The Divine Legation of Moses demonstrated on the Principles of a Religious Deist from the Omission of the Doctrine of a Future State of Reward and Punishment in the Jewish Dispensation." The introduction is in the form of a "Dedication to the Free-Thinkers" in which, while protesting against the buffoonery, scurrility, and other unfair arts which the anti-Christian writers employed in controversy, Warburton carefully guards himself from the supposition of being hostile to the freedom of the press. "No generous and sincere advocate of religion," he says, "would desire an adversary whom the laws had before disarmed." *

* The materials of the above sketch are chiefly taken from an able paper by Mr. Pattison in the volume of *Essays and Reviews*.

The rise of Methodism dates from about 1730. It was a reaction against the coldness and dryness of the current Protestant theology, which has been described as "polished as marble, but also as lifeless and cold." With its multiplied "proofs," and "evidences," and appeals to reason, it had failed to make Christianity better known or more loved by its generation; its authors are constantly bewailing the inefficacy of their own arguments, and the increasing corruption of the age. Methodism appealed to the heart, thereby to awaken the conscience and influence the will; and this is the secret of its astonishing success. It originated in the prayer-meetings of a few devoutly-disposed young men at Oxford, whom Wesley joined, and among whom he at once became the leading spirit. He was himself much influenced by Count Zinzendorf, the founder of Moravianism; but his large and sagacious mind refused to entangle itself in mysticism; and, after a curious debate, they parted, and each went his own way. After fruitlessly endeavouring for many years to accommodate the new movement to the forms of the Establishment, Wesley organised an independent system of ministerial work and government for the sect which he had called into existence. After the middle of the century multitudes of human beings commenced to crowd around the newly-opened manufacturing and mining centres in the northern counties. Neither they nor their employers took much thought about their religious concerns. Hampered by their legal status, and traditionally suspicious of anything approaching to enthusiasm, the clergy of the Established church neglected this new demand on their charity; — and miners and factory hands would have grown up as Pagans in a Christian land, had not the Wesleyan irregulars flung themselves into the breach, and endeavoured to bring the Gospel, according to their understanding of it, within the reach of these untended flocks. At the present time, Methodism is split up into at least seven

different sects or "connexions,"* numbering in all more than seventeen hundred thousand souls. A movement so vast has of course a literature to represent it; but from its sectarian position the literature of Methodism is, to use an American phrase, *sectional* merely; it possesses no permanent or general interest. Wesley himself, and perhaps Fletcher of Madeley, are the only exceptions.

Conyers Middleton wrote in 1729 his *Letter from Rome*, in which he attempted to derive all the ceremonies of the Catholic ritual from the Pagan religion, which it had supplanted. An able reply, *The Catholic Christian Instructed*, was written by Challoner (1737), to the effect that Middleton's averments were in part untrue, in part true, but not to the purpose of his argument, since an external resemblance between a Pagan and a Christian rite was of no importance, provided the inward meaning of the two were totally different.

Philosophy, 1700—1800:—Berkeley, Hume, Reid, Butler, Paley.

Nothing more than a meagre outline of the history of philosophy in this period can here be attempted. Those who devoted themselves to philosophical studies were numerous; this, in fact, up to past the middle of the century, was the fashionable and favourite pursuit with the educated classes. The most famous work of the greatest poet of the age, Pope's *Essay on Man*, is a metaphysico-moral treatise in heroic verse. The philosophers may be classed under various heads: we have the Sensational school, founded by Locke, of whom we have already

* The Original Connexion, the New Connexion, the Primitive Methodists, the Bible Methodists, the Wesleyan Methodist Association, the Wesleyan Methodist Reformers, and the Calvinistic Methodists (who are subdivided into the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion), and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists.

spoken; the Idealists, represented by Bishop Berkeley; the Sceptical school, founded by Hume; the Common-sense or Scotch school, comprising the names of Reid, Brown, and Dugald Stewart; and the Moralists, represented by Butler, Smith, and Paley.

There are few philosophers whose personal character it is more agreeable to contemplate than George Berkeley, the Protestant Bishop of Cloyne. He was born in 1684 at Kilevin, in the county of Kilkenny, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he obtained a fellowship in 1707. About four years later he went over to London, where he was received with open arms. There seems to have been something so winning about his personal address, that criticism, when it questioned his positions, forgot its usual bitterness; and extraordinary natural gifts seem for once to have aroused no envy in the beholder. Pope, whose satire was so unsparing, ascribes —

"To Berkeley every virtue under heaven:"

and Atterbury, after an interview with him, said, "So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman."

Of Berkeley's share in the controversy with the Deists, we have already spoken. His *Principles of Human Knowledge*, published in 1710, contains the idealist system for which his name is chiefly remembered. In devising this, his aim was still practical; he hoped to cut the ground away from beneath the rationalising assailants of Christianity by proving that the existence of the material universe, the supposed invariable laws of which were set up by the sceptics as inconsistent with revelation, was in itself problematical, since all that we can know directly respecting it is the *ideas* which we form of it, which ideas *may*, after all, be delusive. His other philosophical works

* Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy, article Berkeley.

are, *Hylas and Philonous*, *Siris*, *or Reflections on Tar-water*, and a *Theory of Vision*. Sir James Mackintosh was of opinion that Berkeley's works were beyond dispute the finest models of philosophical style since Cicero.

David Hume, born at Edinburgh in 1711, was educated for the bar. He was never married. He enjoyed through life perfect health, and was gifted with unflagging spirits, and a cheerful, amiable disposition. His passions were not naturally strong, and his sound judgment and good sense enabled him to keep them under control. He died in 1776.

Hume's chief philosophical works are contained in two volumes of Essays and Treatises. The first volume consists of *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, in two parts, originally published in 1742 and 1752 respectively. The second volume contains the *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding* and other treatises, the whole of which are a revised condensation of the *Treatise on Human Nature*, published in 1738, and spoken of in the advertisement to the Essays and Treatises as a "juvenile work," for which the author declined to be responsible in his riper years. In these treatises Hume propounds his theory of universal scepticism. Berkeley had denied matter, or the mysterious somewhat inferred by philosophers to exist beneath the sensible properties of objects; and Hume went yet further, and denied *mind*, the substance in which successive sensations and reflections are supposed to inhere. That we do perceive, and do reflect, is, he admitted, certain; but what that is which perceives and reflects, whether it has any independent being of itself, apart from the series of impressions of which it is the subject, is a point altogether obscure, and on which, he maintained, our faculties have no means of determining. Philosophy was thus placed in a dilemma, and became impossible.*

* See Lewes's *History of Philosophy*.

The Scotch or common-sense school has received ample justice at the hands of Cousin in his *Cours de Philosophie Moderne.* It commenced with Reid's *Inquiry into the Human Mind upon the principles of Common Sense,* published in 1764. As a reaction against the idealism of Berkeley and the scepticism of Hume, the rise of the common-sense school was natural enough. It said in effect—"We have a rough general notion of the existence of matter outside and independently of ourselves, of which no subtlety can deprive us; and the instinctive impulse which we feel to put faith in the results of our mental operations is an irrefragable proof, and the best that can be given, of the reasonableness of that faith."

Among the moralists of the period Butler holds the highest place. The fact of the existence in the mind of disinterested affections and dispositions, pointing to the good of others, which Hobbes had denied, Butler, in those admirable *Sermons* preached in the Rolls Chapel, has incontrovertibly established. "In these sermons he has taught truths more capable of being exactly distinguished from the doctrines of his predecessors, more satisfactorily established by him, more comprehensively applied to particulars, more rationally connected with each other, and therefore more worthy of the name of discovery, than any with which we are acquainted; if we ought not, with some hesitation, to except the first steps of the Grecian philosophers towards a 'Theory of Morals.'"* Hutcheson, an Irishman, author of an *Inquiry into Beauty and Virtue* and other works, followed in the same track of thought. Hume's *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* was considered by himself to be the best of the writings; it is, at any rate, the least paradoxical. Adam Smith, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments,* published in 1759, follows Hume in holding the principle of *sympathy*

* Mackintosh's Dissertation, p. 191.

to be the chief source of our moral feelings and judgments. Hartley, in his remarkable book, *Observations on Man* (1749), teaches that the development of the moral faculty within us is mainly effected through the principle of the *association* of ideas, a term first applied in this sense by Locke. Tucker's *Light of Nature* is chiefly metaphysical; so far as he touches on morals, he shows a disposition to return to the selfish theory, in opposition to the view of disinterested moral feelings introduced by Butler. Lastly, William Paley, following Tucker, elaborated in his *Moral and Political Philosophy*, published in 1785, his well-known system of Utilitarianism: "Virtue," he said, "is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." Mackintosh remarks that it follows, as a necessary consequence from this proposition, that "every act which flows from generosity or benevolence is a vice."

Political Science.

Hume's political writings, on the Origin of Government, the Protestant Succession, the Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth, &c. &c., form a large portion of the two volumes of Essays and Treatises already mentioned. Hume regards political science as a speculative philosopher; in Burke, the knowledge and the tendencies of the philosopher, the jurist, the statesman, and the patriot, appear all united. The fundamental idea of his political philosophy was, that civil liberty was rather prescriptive than theoretic; that Order implied Progress, and Progress presupposed Order; that in a political society the rights of its members were not absolute and unconditional, but strictly relative to, and to be sought in conformity with, the existing constitution of that society. These views are put forth in the most masterly and eloquent manner in his

Reflections on the Revolution in France, published in 1790. Among those who supported in this country the political theories of the French Jacobins and Rousseau, the most eminent were William Godwin and Thomas Paine. The former published his *Inquiry concerning Political Justice* in 1793; the latter was living in America during the war of independence, and, by the publication of his periodical tracts entitled *Common Sense*, contributed not a little to chase away the despondency which was beginning at one time to prevail among the colonists, and to define their position and political aims. The *Rights of Man* appeared in 1792, and the *Age of Reason*, a work conceived in the extremest French free-thinking spirit, in 1794.

Political Economy: — Adam Smith: Criticism; Burke, Reynolds.

The science of Political Economy was, if not invented, at least enlarged, simplified, and systematised by Adam Smith, in his celebrated *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). The late rise of this science may be ascribed to several causes; — to the contempt with which the ancient Greek philosophers regarded the whole business of money-getting; to the aversion entertained by the philosophers of later schools for *luxury*, as the great depraver of morals, whence they would be little disposed to analyse the sources of that wealth, the accumulation of which made luxury possible; lastly, to the circumstance, that during the middle ages the clergy were the sole educators of society, and were not likely to undertake the study of phenomena which lay quite out of their track of thought and action. Only when the laity came to be generally educated, and began to reflect intelligently upon the principles and laws

involved in the every-day operations of the temporal life, could a science of wealth become possible.

Certain peculiarities about the East Indian trade of the seventeenth century, which consisted chiefly in the exchange of silks and other Indian manufactures for bullion, gave occasion to a number of pamphlets, in which the true principles of commerce were gradually developed. But what was called the "mercantile system" was long the favourite doctrine both with statesmen and economists, and, indeed, is even yet not quite exploded. By this was meant a system of cunning devices, having for their object, by repressing trade in one direction, and encouraging it in another, to leave the community at the end of each year more plentifully supplied with the precious metals (in which alone wealth was then supposed to consist) than at the end of the preceding. The tradition of over-government which had come down from the Roman empire, joined to the narrow corporate spirit which had arisen among the great trading cities of the middle ages, led naturally to such views of national economy. Everyone knows what efforts it has cost in our own days to establish the simple principle of commercial freedom — the right to "buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market." That this principle has at last prevailed, and that money, in so far as it is not itself a mere commodity, is now regarded, not as wealth, but as the variable representative of wealth, is mainly due to the great work of Adam Smith.

Burke published in 1756 his celebrated philosophical *Essay* on the origin of our ideas of the *Sublime and Beautiful*. Sir Joshua Reynolds' excellent *Discourses on Painting*, or rather the first part of them, appeared in 1779. Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting*, compiled from the unwieldy collections of Virtue on the lives and works of British artists, were published between the years 1761 and 1771.

CHAPTER VI.

MODERN TIMES

1800—1850.

As no summary which our limits would permit us to give of the political events between 1800 and 1850 could add materially to the student's knowledge respecting a period so recent, we shall omit here the historical sketch which we prefixed to each of the two preceding chapters.

At once, from the opening of the nineteenth century, we meet with originality and with energetic convictions; the deepest problems are sounded with the utmost freedom; decorum gives place to earnestness; and principles are mutually confronted instead of forms. We speak of England only; the change to which we refer set in at an earlier period in France and Germany. In the main, the chief pervading movement of society may be described as one of reaction against the ideas of the eighteenth century. Those ideas were, in brief, Rationalism and Formalism, both in literature and in politics. Pope, for instance, was a rationalist, and also a formalist, in both respects. In his views of society, he took the excellence of no institution for granted — he would not admit that antiquity in itself constituted a claim to reverence; on the contrary, his turn of mind disposed him to try all things, old and new, by the test of their rationality, and to ridicule the multiplicity of forms and usages — some marking ideas originally irrational, others whose meaning, once clear and true, had been lost or obscured through the change of circumstances,

which encumbered the public life of his time. Yet he was, at the same time, a political formalist in this sense, that he desired no sweeping changes, and was quite content that the social system should work on as it was. It suited him, and that was enough for his somewhat selfish philosophy. Again, in literature he was a rationalist, and also a formalist; but here in a good sense. For in literary as in all other art, the *form* is of prime importance; and his destructive logic, while it crushed bad forms, bound him to develop his powers in strict conformity to good ones. Now the reaction against these ideas was two-fold. The conservative reaction, while it pleaded the claims of prescription, denounced the aberrations of reason, and endeavoured to vindicate or resuscitate the ideas lying at the base of existing political society, which the rationalism of the eighteenth century had sapped, rebelled at the same time against the arbitrary rules with which — not Pope himself, but his followers — had fettered literature. The liberal, or revolutionary reaction, while, accepting the destructive rationalism of the eighteenth century, it scouted its political formalism as weak and inconsistent, joined the conservative school in rebelling against the reign of the arbitrary and the formal in literature. This, then, is the point of contact between Scott and the conservative school on the one hand, and Coleridge, Godwin, Byron, Shelley, and the rest of the revolutionary school on the other. They were all agreed that literature, and especially poetry, was become a cold, lifeless affair, conforming to all the rules and proprieties, but divorced from living nature, and the warm spontaneity of the heart. They imagined that the extravagant and exclusive admiration of the classical models had occasioned this mischief; and fixing their eyes on the rude yet grand beginnings of modern society, which the spectacle of the feudal ages presented to them, they thought that by imbuing themselves with the spirit of romance and chivalry

— by coming into moral contact with the robust faith and energetic passions of a race not yet sophisticated by civilization — they would wake up within themselves the great original forces of the human spirit — forces which, once set in motion, would develop congenial literary forms, produced, not by the *labor limæ*, but by a true inspiration.

Especially in poetry was this the case. To the artificial, mechanical, didactic school, which Pope's successors had made intolerable, was now opposed a counter theory of the poetic function, which we may call the theory of the Spontaneous. As light flows from the stars, or perfume from flowers — as the nightingale cannot help singing, nor the bee refrain from making honey; — so, according to this theory, poetry is the spontaneous emanation of a musical and beautiful soul. "The poet is born, and is not made;" and so is it with his poetry. To pretend to construct a beautiful poem, is as if one were to try to construct a tree. Something dead and wooden will be the result in either case. In a poet, effort is tantamount to condemnation; for it implies the absence of inspiration. For the same reason, to be consciously didactic is incompatible with the true poetic gift. For whatever of great value comes from a poet, is not that which he wills to say, but that which he cannot help saying,— that which some higher power — call it Nature or what you will — dictates through his lips, as through an oracle.

This theory, which certainly had many attractions and contained much truth, led to various important results. It drove away from Helicon many versifiers who had no business there, by depriving them of an audience. The Beatties, Akensides, Youngs, and Darwins, who had inflicted their dulness on the last century, under the impression that it was poetry — a delusion shared by their readers,— had to "pale their ineffectual fire" and decamp, when their soporific productions were confronted with the

startling and direct utterances of the disciples of the Spontaneous. On the other hand, the theory produced new mischiefs and generated new mistakes. It did not silence inferior poets; but they were of a different class from what they had been before. It was not now the moralist or the dabbler in philosophy, who, imagining himself to have important information to convey to mankind, and aiming at delighting while he instructed, constructed his epic, or ode, or metrical essay, as the medium of communication. It was rather the man gifted with a fatal facility of rhyme — with a mind teeming with trivial thoughts, and corresponding words — who was misled by the new theory into confounding the rapidity of his conceptions with the spontaneity of genius, and into thinking revision or curtailment of them a kind of treason to the divine afflatus. Such writers generally produced two or three pretty pieces, written at their brightest moments, amidst a miscellaneous heap of "fugitive poems"— rightly so called —which were good for little or nothing. Upon real genius the theory acted both for good and for evil. Social success, upon which even the best poets of the eighteenth century had set the highest value, was despised by the higher minds of the new school. They loved to commune with nature and their own souls in solitude, believing that here was the source of true poetic inspiration. The resulting forms were, so far as they went, most beautiful and faultless in art; they were worthy of the profound and beautiful thoughts which they embodied. In diction, rhythm, proportion, melody — in everything, in short, that constitutes beauty of form — no poems ever composed attained to greater perfection than Shelley's *Skylark* or Keats' *Hyperion*. Yet these forms, after all, were not of the highest order. The judgement of many generations has assigned the palm of superiority among poetic forms to the Epos and the Drama; yet in neither of these did the school of poets of which we speak achieve any success of moment. This was

probably due to the influence of the theory which we are considering. The truth is, that no extensive and complex poem was ever composed without large help from that constructive faculty, which it was the object of the theory to depreciate. Even Shakspeare, whom it is — or was — the fashion to consider as a wild, irregular poet, writing from impulse, and careless of art, is known to have carefully altered and re-arranged some of his plays — *Hamlet*, for instance — and by so doing to have greatly raised their poetic value. Virgil — Tasso — Dante — must all have expended a great amount of dry intellectual labour upon their respective masterpieces, in order to harmonise the parts and perfect the forms of expression. The bright moments are transitory, even with minds endowed with the highest order of imagination; but by means of this labour —

> "tasks in hours of insight willed
> May be in hours of gloom fulfilled."

But this truth was obscured, or but dimly visible, to minds which viewed poetry in the light we have described. Even Scott — true worker though he was — may be held to have produced poems not commensurate with the power that was in him, owing to a want of due pains in construction, attributable to the influence of the prevalent ideas.

As in former chapters, we propose to single out one of the leading poets of the nineteenth century, and, in giving a sketch of his career, to interweave such notices of contemporary poets as our limits may permit. Our choice falls on Sir Walter Scott.

Poetry: — Sir Walter Scott, Shelley, &c.

The *Life of Scott*, edited by his son-in-law, Lockhart, opens with a remarkable fragment of autobiography.

Unhappily, it extends to no more than sixty pages, and conducts us and the writer only to the epoch where, his education being finished, he was about to launch forth into the world; but these few manly and modest pages contain a record of the early years of a great life, which cannot easily be matched in interest. Scott was born at Edinburgh on the 15th August, 1771. His father, descended from the border family or clan of Scott, of which the chieftain was the Duke of Buccleuch, was a writer to the signet, that is, a solicitor belonging to the highest branch of his profession. A lameness in the right leg, first contracted when he was eighteen months old, was the cause of his being sent away to pass in the country many of those years which most boys pass at school. He was fond of reading, and the books which touched his fancy or his feelings made an indelible impression on him. Forty years later he remembered the deep delight with which, at the age of thirteen, stretched under a platanus in a garden sloping down to the Tweed at Kelso, he had first read Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*. "From this time," he says, "the love of natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or the remains of our father's piety or splendour, became with me an insatiable passion, which, if circumstances had permitted, I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe." When he was nineteen years old, his father gave him his choice, whether to adopt his own profession, or to be called to the bar. Scott preferred the latter; he studied the Scotch law with that conscientious and cheerful diligence which distinguished him through life, and began to practise as an advocate in 1792, with fair prospects of professional success. But the bent of nature was too strong for him: literature engrossed more and more of his time and thoughts; and his first publication, in 1796, of translations of *Lenore*, and other German poems by Bürger, was soon followed by various contributions to Lewis' *Tales*

of Wonder, and by the compilation of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, many pieces in which are original, in the year 1802. In 1797 he had married Charlotte Carpenter (or Charpentier), and settled at Lasswade on the Esk, near "classic Hawthornden." Foreseeing that he would never succeed at the bar, he obtained in 1799, through the influence of the Duke of Buccleuch, the appointment of Sheriff of Selkirkshire, to which, in 1806, was added a clerkship in the Court of Session, with a salary of 1,300*l.* a year. Both these appointments, which involved magisterial and official duties of a rather burdensome nature, always most punctually and conscientiously discharged, Scott held till within a year before his death.

A mind so active and powerful as that of Scott could not remain unaffected by the wild ferment of spirits caused by the breaking out of the French Revolution. But in the main, the foundations of his moral and spiritual being remained unshaken by those tempests. His robust common sense taught him to attend to his own business in preference to devoting himself to the universal interests of mankind; and his love of what was ancient and possessed historic fame — his fondness for local and family traditions — and the predilection which he had for the manners and ideas of the days of chivalry — made the levelling doctrines of the Revolution especially hateful to him. It was otherwise with most of the poets, his contemporaries. Wordsworth, after taking his degree at Cambridge, in 1791— a ceremony for which he showed his contempt by devoting the preceding week to the perusal of *Clarissa Harlowe* — went over to France, and, during a residence there of thirteen months, formed an intimacy with Beaupuis, a Girondist general, and with many of the Brissotins at Paris. Southey, upon whose smaller brain and livelier temperament the French ideas acted so powerfully as to throw him completely off his balance, wrote the dramatic sketch of *Wat Tyler* — a most explosive and seditious production —

while at Oxford in 1794, and for some time seriously contemplated joining Coleridge in establishing a Pantisocratic community "on the banks of the Susquehanna." Coleridge, whose teeming brain produced in later life so many systems, or fragments of systems, was in 1794 full of his wonderful scheme of "Pantisocracy," an anticipation of the phalanstères of Fourier, and the Icaria of Cabet. In his ode to *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*, published in 1798, the Jacobin poet discharges the full vials of his wrath on Mr. Pitt, as the chief opponent of the progress of revolution. The three weird sisters, after expressing their deep obligations to the British statesman, exchange ideas on the subject of the best mode of rewarding him. Famine will gnaw the multitude till they "seize him and his brood;"—Slaughter will make them "tear him limb from limb." But Fire taxes their gratitude with poverty of resource :—

"And is this all that you can do
For him who did so much for you?
* * * * *
I alone am faithful; I
Cling to him everlastingly."

In 1804 Scott removed to Ashestiel, a house overlooking the Tweed, near Selkirk, for the more convenient discharge of his magisterial duties. The *locale* is brought picturesquely before us in the introduction to the first canto of *Marmion*: —

"Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled green-wood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed."

Early in 1805 appeared the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, the first of the series of Scott's romantic poems. Its composition was due to a suggestion of the beautiful Duchess of Buccleuch, who, upon hearing for the first time the wild border legend of Gilpin Horner, turned to Scott, and said, "Why not embody it in a poem?" The *Lay* at once obtained a prodigious popularity. *Marmion* was published in 1808, and severely criticised soon after by Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*. Scott's soreness under the infliction, united to his growing aversion for the politics of the *Edinburgh*, led him to concentrate all his energies upon the establishment of a rival review, and the *Quarterly* was accordingly set on foot in 1809. The *Lady of the Lake* appeared in 1810. Of these three poems Lockhart says, "The *Lay* is generally considered as the most natural and original, *Marmion* as the most powerful and splendid, and the *Lady of the Lake* as the most interesting, romantic, picturesque, and graceful." The *Lay*, however, was not entirely original. Scott himself, in the preface to the edition of 1829, acknowledges the obligation under which he lay to Coleridge's poem of *Christabel*. This striking fragment, he says, "from the singularly irregular structure of the stanzas, and the liberty which it allows the author to adapt the sound to the sense, seemed to me exactly suited to such an extravaganza as I meditated on the subject of Gilpin Horner . . . . It was in *Christabel* that I first found [this measure] used in serious poetry, and it is to Mr. Coleridge that I am bound to make the acknowledgement due from the pupil to his master."

His other romantic poems, the *Vision of Don Roderick*, *Rokeby*, the *Lord of the Isles*, the *Bridal of Triermain*, and *Harold the Dauntless* — all published between 1811 and 1817 — manifest a progressive declension. Scott was heartily tired of *Harold* before it was finished, and worked off the concluding portion in an agony of impatience and dissatisfaction. When asked some years later why he had

given up writing poetry, he simply said, "Because Byron *bet* me." Byron had returned from his long ramble over the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean in 1811, and in the course of the five following years he published his Oriental Tales — the *Bride of Abydos*, the *Giaour*, the *Siege of Corinth*, and the *Corsair*, which, by their highly-coloured scenes and impassioned sentiment, made Scott's poetry appear by comparison tame and pale. Writing to the Countess Purgstall in 1821, he says: "In truth, I have given up poetry . . . . . besides, I felt the prudence of giving way before the more forcible and powerful genius of Byron;" and would, moreover, he adds, hesitate "to exhibit in my own person the sublime attitude of the dying gladiator;" alluding to the well-known passage in *Childe Harold*.

But in 1814 Scott struck out a new path, in which neither Byron nor any other living man could keep pace with him. Ransacking an old cabinet, he happened one day, in the spring of that year, to lay his hand on an old unfinished MS., containing a fragment of a tale on the rising of the clans in 1745, which he had written some years before, but, feeling dissatisfied with, had put by. He now read it over, and thought that something could be made of it. He finished the tale in six weeks, and published it anonymously, under the title of *Waverley, or a Tale of Sixty Years since*. The impression which it created was prodigious. *Waverley* was soon followed by *Guy Mannering* and the *Antiquary*. Between 1816 and 1826 appeared seventeen other novels from the same practised hand; but it was Scott's humour still to preserve the anonymous; and though many literary men felt all along a moral certainty that the author of *Waverley* was, and could be, no other than the author of *Marmion*, and Mr. Adolphus wrote in 1821 an extremely ingenious pamphlet*,

* *Letters on the authorship of Waverley.*

establishing the identity of the two almost to demonstration, yet the public had been so mystified, that it was not till the occasion of a public dinner at Edinburgh in 1827, when Scott made a formal avowal of his responsibility as the author of the entire series, that all uncertainty was removed.

The noble and generous nature of Scott nowhere appears more conspicuously than in the history of his relations with the other eminent poets of his time. Byron, stung by the unsparing criticism to which Jeffrey subjected his youthful effusions * in the *Edinburgh Review*, had replied by his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in which, including Scott among the poets of the Lake school, he had made him the object of a petulant and unfounded invective. Scott alludes to this attack from the "young whelp of a lord" in many of his letters, but evidently without the slightest feeling of bitterness. When he visited London in the spring of 1815, and was enthusiastically received by the generation, just grown to manhood, which had been fed by his verse, he became acquainted with Byron, and their mutual liking was so strong, that the acquaintance in the course of a few weeks almost grew into intimacy. They met for the last time in the autumn of the same year, after Scott's return from Waterloo. Of Coleridge, Scott always spoke with interest and admiration, and endeavoured to serve him more than once. With Southey he kept up a pretty constant correspondence, and besides serving him in other ways, procured the laureateship for him in 1813, after having declined it for himself. Towards Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, whose touchy and irritable pride would have provoked any less generous patron, his kindness was unvarying and indefatigable. With Moore he became acquainted on the occasion of his visit to Ireland in 1825, and received him

* The *Hours of Idleness*,

at Abbotsford later in the same year. The Irish poet made a very favourable impression. Scott says in his diary — "There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good breeding, about him, which is delightful. Not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little, very little man; . . . . but not insignificant, like Lewis. . . . His countenance is plain but expressive;—so very animated, especially in speaking or singing, that it is far more interesting than the finest features could have made it." Of Scott's intercourse with Sir Humphry Davy — himself a thorough poet in nature — Lockhart relates an amusing anecdote: — Scott, Davy, the biographer, and a rough Scotch friend of Sir Walter's, named Laidlaw, were together at Abbotsford in 1820; the two latter being silent and admiring listeners during the splendid colloquies of the poet and the philosopher. At last, Laidlaw broke out with —'Gude preserve us; this is a very superior occasion! Eh, sirs! I wonder if Shakspeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk other up!'

In 1826 occurred the crash of Scott's fortunes, through the failure of the houses of Constable and Ballantyne. With the Ballantynes, who were printers, Scott had been in partnership since 1805, though even his dearest friends were ignorant of the fact. How bravely he bore himself in the midst of the utter ruin which came upon him — how strenuously he applied his wonderful powers of thought and work to the task of retrieving his position — how he struggled on till health, faculties, and life itself gave way — these are matters which belong to the story of the man rather than of the author. The novels and other works composed between 1826 and his death in 1832, though they fill very many volumes, manifest a progressive decline of power. *Woodstock* was in preparation at the time when the stroke came; but there is no falling off in the concluding portion, such as might tell of the agonies of mind through which the writer was passing. To *Wood-*

stock, however, succeeded *Anne of Geierstein*, the *Fair Maid of Perth*, *Count Robert of Paris*, and *Castle Dangerous*, all of which, but especially the last two, betoken a gradual obscuration and failure of the powers of imagination and invention. In 1827 he published a *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*. A work on *Demonology and Witchcraft*, and the *Tales of a Grandfather*, nearly complete the list. In the summer of 1832 he visited Italy in a frigate which the government placed at his disposal, to recruit, if that were possible, the vital energies of a frame which, massive and muscular as was the mould in which nature had cast it, was now undermined and worn out by care and excessive toil. But it was too late; and, feeling that the end was near, Scott hurried homewards to breathe his last in his beloved native land. After gradually sinking for two months, he expired at Abbotsford, in the midst of his children, on the afternoon of a calm September day in 1832.

We proceed to name the principal works of the other poets, mentioning them in the order of their deaths.

John Keats, author of *Endymion* and *Hyperion*, was cut off by consumption in 1821, in his twenty-sixth year. He was the friend of Shelley, who mourned his loss in the exquisite elegy of *Adonais*.

Percy Bysshe Shelley, born in 1792, embraced with fervour, even from his school-boy days, both the destructive and the constructive ideas of the revolutionary school. He was enthusiastically convinced that the great majority of mankind was, and with trifling exceptions had always been, enslaved by custom, by low material thoughts, by tyranny, and by superstition, and he no less fervently believed in the perfectibility of the individual and of society, as the result of the bursting of these bonds, and of a philosophical and philanthropic system of education. Among other restraints, he spurned at first even those of rhyme; the lyrical portions of *Queen Mab*, his earliest poem, are

so many wild lawless bursts of rushing verse, with a certain resemblance to the choruses of Æschylus. *The Revolt of Islam*, an ideal picture of the struggle maintained by an awakened people against the beliefs and institutions that it had previously held sacred, but which in the heated fancy of the poet appeared as the causes of all its misery, was published in 1817. It is in twelve cantos, the metre being the Spenserian stanza. To a mind like Shelley's it may be conceived how great was the attraction of the story of Prometheus, the great Titan who rebelled against the gods. To this attraction we owe the drama of *Prometheus Unbound*. His tragedy of *The Cenci*, written at Rome in 1820, shows great dramatic power, but the nature of the story renders it impossible that it should be represented on the stage. The lyrical drama of *Hellas*, written in 1821, was suggested by the efforts which the insurgent Greeks were then making to shake off the yoke of their Turkish tyrants. Shelley regarded with extreme indignation the conversion of Wordsworth to conservative sentiments, and he gave vent to his feelings by writing the satire of *Peter Bell the Third*. Among his shorter poems may be specified — the *Sensitive Plant*, the lovely ethereal lyric *To a Skylark*, *The Cloud*, *Stanzas written in dejection near Naples*, and *Epipsychidion*. This wonderfully gifted man was suddenly snatched from existence in July 1822, being drowned by the upsetting of his boat in the Gulf of Spezzia.

Byron represents the universal reaction of the nineteenth century against the ideas of the eighteenth. We have seen the literary reaction exemplified in Scott; but the protest of Byron was more comprehensive, and reached to deeper regions of thought. Moody and misanthropical, he rejected the whole manner of thought of his predecessors; and the scepticism of the eighteenth century suited him as little as its popular belief. Unbelievers of the class of Hume and Gibbon did not *suffer* on account of being

without faith; their turn of mind was Epicurean; the world of sense and intelligence furnished them with as much of enjoyment as they required, and they had no quarrel with the social order which secured to them the tranquil possession of their daily pleasures. But Byron had a mind of that daring and impetuous temper which, while it rushes into the path of doubt suggested by cooler heads, presently recoils from the consequences of its own act, and shudders at the moral desolation which scepticism spreads over its life. He proclaimed to the world his misery and despair; and everywhere his words seemed to touch a sympathetic chord throughout the cultivated society of Europe. In *Childe Harold*, — a poem of reflection and sentiment, of which the first two cantos were published in 1812 — and also in the dramas of *Manfred* and *Cain*, the peculiar characteristics of Byron's genius are most forcibly represented. The *Hours of Idleness*, his first work, written in 1807, when he was but nineteen, are poems truly juvenile, and show little promise of the power and versatility to which his mind afterwards attained. The satire of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, already referred to, was written in 1809. All the leading poets of the day came under the lash; but to all, except Southey, he subsequently made the *amende honorable* in some way or other. With the laureate he was never on good terms; and their mutual dislike broke out at various times into furious discord. Byron could not forgive in Southey, whose opinions in youth had been so wild and Jacobinical, the intolerant Toryism of his manhood. Southey's feelings towards Byron seem to have been a mixture of dread, dislike, and disapproval. In the preface to the *Vision of Judgment*, a poem on the death of George III., Southey spoke with great severity of the "Satanic school" of authors, and their leading spirit, alluding to Byron's *Don Juan*, which had recently appeared anonymously. This led to a fierce literary warfare,

conducted in the columns of newspapers and in other modes, which Byron would have cut short by a challenge, but his friends dissuaded him from sending it. It is little creditable to Southey that the most acrimonious and insulting of all his letters appeared in the *Courier* a few months after Byron had died in Missolonghi, a martyr to the cause of the liberty of Greece. *Don Juan*, — a strange medley, in which satire, narrative, description, and criticism are jumbled together without any principle of arrangement, — was composed in the eight-line stanza, the *ottava rima* of the Italian poets. Byron died in 1824.

Crabbe, the author of several didactic narrative poems of great merit, died at an advanced age in 1832. His most finished and powerful work, the *Tales of the Hall*, appeared in 1819.

Coleridge, the "noticeable man with large grey eyes," * whose equal in original power of genius has rarely appeared amongst men, published his first volume of poems in 1796. His project of a Pantisocratic community to be founded in America has been already noticed. Visionary as it was, he received Southey's announcement of his withdrawal from the scheme with a tempest of indignation. For some years after his marriage with the sister of Southey's wife, he supported himself by writing for the newspapers and other literary work. Feeble health, and an excessive nervous sensibility, led him, about the year 1799, to commence the practice of taking opium, and he was enslaved to this miserable habit for twelve or fourteen years. Its paralysing effects on the mind and character none better knew, or has more accurately described, than himself. What impression he produced at this period upon others may be gathered from a passage in one of Southey's letters, written in 1804. "Coleridge," he says, "is worse in body than you seem to

* Wordsworth.

believe; but the main cause is his management of himself, or rather want of management. His mind is in a perpetual St. Vitus's dance — eternal activity without action. At times, he feels mortified that he should have done so little, but this feeling never produces any exertion. I will begin to-morrow, he says, and thus he has been all his life long letting to-day slip. . . . Poor fellow! there is no one thing which gives me so much pain as the witnessing such a waste of unequalled power."

Coleridge's poetical works fill three small volumes, and consist of *Juvenile Poems, Sibylline Leaves,* the *Ancient Mariner, Christabel,* and the plays of *Remorse, Zapolya,* and *Wallenstein,*— the last being a translation of the play of Schiller. Coleridge's latter years were passed under the roof of Mr. Gillman, a surgeon, at Highgate. One who then sought his society has drawn the following picture of the white-haired sage in the evening of his chequered life: —

"Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle, attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. His express contributions to poetry, philosophy, or any specific province of human literature or enlightenment had been small and sadly intermittent; but he had, especially among young inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician, character. . . . A sublime man; who, alone in those dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood; escaping from the black materialisms and revolutionary deluges, with 'God, Freedom, Immortality,' still his; a king of men. The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer; but to the rising spirits of the young generation he had this dusky sublime character; and sat there as a kind of *Magus,* girt in mystery and enigma, his Dodona oak-grove (Mr. Gillman's house at Highgate) whispering strange things, uncertain whether oracles or jargon."*

* Carlyle's *Life of Sterling.*

Mr. Carlyle goes on to speak of the disappointing and hazy character of Coleridge's conversation, copious and rich as it was, and occasionally running clear into glorious passages of light and beauty. Such, indeed, is the general effect of his life, and of all that he ever did. One takes up the *Biographia Literaria* (1817), imagining that one will at least find some consistent and intelligible account of the time, place, motive, and other circumstances bearing upon the composition of his different works; but there is scarcely anything of the kind. The book possesses an interest of its own, on account of the subtle criticism upon Wordsworth's poetry and poetical principles, which occupies the chief portion of it; but when you have arrived at the end of all introductory matter, and at the point where the biography should commence, the book is done; it is all preliminaries,— a solid porch to an air-drawn temple. Coleridge died in 1834.

Southey left Oxford as a marked man on account of his extreme revolutionary sympathies, and, being unwilling to take orders, and unable, from want of means, to study medicine, was obliged, as he tells us, "perforce to enter the muster-roll of authors." The prevailing taste for what was extravagant and romantic, exemplified in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels and Kotzebue's plays, perhaps led him to select a wild Arabian legend as the groundwork of his first considerable poem, *Thalaba the Destroyer*, published in 1801. *Thalaba*, like Shelley's *Queen Mab*, is written in irregular Pindaric strophes without rhyme. *Madoc*, an epic poem in blank verse, founded on the legend of a voyage made by a Welsh prince to America in the twelfth century, and of his founding a colony there, appeared in 1805; and the *Curse of Kehama*, in which are represented the awful forms of the Hindu Pantheon, and the vast and gorgeous imagery of the Hindu poetry, in 1811. In 1803 Southey settled at Greta Hall, near Keswick; and here the remainder of his life was spent, in the incessant

prosecution of his various literary undertakings. After the death of his wife, in 1837, he became an altered man. "So completely," he writes, "was she part of myself, that the separation makes me feel like a different creature. While she was herself I had no sense of growing old." After his second marriage in 1839, his mind began gradually to fail, and the lamp of reason at last went entirely out. In this sad condition he died in the year 1843.

Campbell's first production, the *Pleasures of Hope* (1799), was conceived in the didactic and moralising spirit of the eighteenth century. It was probably suggested by Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination*. Adopting the narrative style, in which Scott had been so successful, Campbell wrote in 1709 his *Gertrude of Wyoming*, a tale of which the scene is laid in Pennsylvania, and the interest is derived from the customs and incidents of Indian life. But it is on account of his ballads and other lyrics that his poetic fame will live. His best performances of this kind are the patriotic songs of *The Battle of the Baltic* and *Ye Mariners of England*, the war lyric of *Hohenlinden* (said to be founded on his own observation, for he witnessed the battle), and the pathetic stanzas of the *Soldier's Dream* and the *Exile of Erin*.* *The Last Man* is interesting from the nature of the subject: it gives us the soliloquy of the last representative of the human race uttered from among tombs upon the crumbling earth; but the effort is somewhat too ambitious, and many expressions and images are overstrained. Campbell died in 1844.

Wordsworth was in his twentieth year at the time of the taking of the Bastile, and hailed with the confiding enthusiasm of youth what seemed to be the dawning of a

* The authorship of this has been claimed for Reynolds, an Irish poet; but Mr. Lover, in his *Irish Minstrelsy*, has shown that there is no good reason to doubt its exclusive composition by Campbell.

new and happier epoch for mankind. He paid a long visit to France, but retired from the darkening scene before it was too late, and returned to his native valleys. He would enter no profession; but, accompanied by his sister, to whose affection and intelligent sympathy he never concealed his deep obligation, and supporting himself and her on a sum of money bequeathed to him by a college friend, whom he had nursed and watched over in sickness to the last consummation of a quick decline, he roamed from one country place to another, observing rural manners, and feeding his meditative soul on the aspects of natural beauty, till, in 1799, he finally settled at Grasmere, where, and at the neighbouring village of Rydal, the remainder of his life was passed. In 1798 he published the *Lyrical Ballads*, to the second edition of which he prefixed a very remarkable preface, expounding the poetical principles which the *Ballads* were intended to illustrate. This preface is written in the eloquent and enthusiastic tone of a man who believes himself to have discovered principles of surpassing importance, till then neglected, the recognition of which — inevitable sooner or later — would revolutionise the whole art of poetry. The reader who desires to see a profound and masterly analysis of these principles, should consult the chapters devoted to the subject in Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. There he will find what was true in these views separated from what was false, with the subtlest discrimination. Admitting the force and truth of Wordsworth's energetic denunciation of "poetic diction," meaning thereby a set of conventional images and phrases, inadmissible in prose, which inferior poets are accustomed to palm off upon the public as indispensable to true poetry, Coleridge showed, on the other hand, that Wordsworth had failed to grasp the true and essential distinction between poetry and prose, and so had been led partially to confound the requirements of both. Some few of the *Lyrical Ballads*,

and much of Wordsworth's later poetry, are certainly as very prose as ever was written; on the other hand, both in this first collection and in his later compositions, are many most beautiful poems, which strictly conform to all the sound and ancient rules of the poetic art, which have been acted upon by all great poets since the time of Homer, and enforced by all great critics from the days of Aristotle. But the *Lyrical Ballads* did not receive in other quarters such genial criticism as that of Coleridge. The lofty and somewhat oracular tone of the preface provoked the reviewers beyond measure, and the few faulty or vapid poems in the collection — *Peter Bell, Goody Blake and Harry Gill, The Idiot Boy,* and one or two more, — were at once seized upon, loaded with ridicule, and quoted as fair specimens of the entire work. The sale was consequently stopped; yet from the first Wordsworth found a few ardent admirers, who never ceased to advocate his cause, and whose steady enthusiasm gradually drew the public round to their side. But full thirty years elapsed before Wordsworth found favour at the hands of the leading reviews.

Two more volumes of poems appeared in 1807; and the *Excursion*, a philosophical poem of great length, forming, however, but the second part of a still larger work, the *Recluse*, was published in 1814. The *Prelude*, being an introduction to the same work, though finished in 1805, was not published till 1850. The *Excursion* was nearly as ill received by the reviewers as the *Lyrical Ballads* had been; but Wordsworth bore all hostile criticism with a stout heart. "Let the age," he wrote *, "continue to love its own darkness; I shall continue to write, with, I trust, the light of Heaven upon me." His own account of the design of the work, given in the introduction, which, like the *Excursion* itself, is in blank verse, is well worth extracting: —

* See his Life by Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, vol. ii. p. 52.

"Beauty, a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
From earth's materials — waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields — like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main — why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
— I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation; — and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted: — and how exquisitely too,
Theme this but little heard of among men,
The external World is fitted to the Mind."

In 1813, having received through the influence of Lord Lonsdale the appointment of distributor of stamps for the counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland, Wordsworth settled at Rydal Mount. In 1827 he published his entire poetical works in five volumes, arranging them in different classes, not — as was the ancient custom — according to the form or mould in which they were respectively cast, — as Dramatic, Lyrical, Pastoral, &c., — but according to the faculties of mind predominant in their production, as Poems of the Fancy, Poems of the Imagination, Poems of Sentiment and Reflection, &c. This new method of classification marks the invasion of the realm of Poetry by the increasingly self-conscious, meditative,— in one word — subjective, spirit, which is charac-

teristic of modern times. The new conceptions will no longer fit into the old moulds, but either overflow them, or clothe themselves with new and more flexible forms. Thus we have dramas, such as *Philip Van Artevelde*, not adapted for the stage, and lyrics, such as many of Wordsworth's, in which Thought is substituted for Passion; while, on the other hand, we have, and shall continue to have, innumerable poems, to which the old names are altogether inapplicable, and which must therefore be grouped in some such way as Wordsworth has here attempted.

In 1843, upon the death of Southey, Wordsworth was appointed poet-laureate. Peel's letters on the occasion reflect equal honour upon him and the poet. He had the happiness of preserving his faculties unclouded, and almost unweakened, to the last; dying at Rydal Mount in his eightieth year, after a short illness, in 1850.

Moore, though of humble parentage, was enabled by his own striking talents, and by the self-denying and intelligent exertions of his excellent mother, to receive and profit by the best education that was to be obtained in his native Ireland. He went up to London in 1799 to study for the bar, with little money in his purse, but furnished with an introduction to Lord Moira, and with the manuscript of his translation of *Anacreon*. Through Lord Moira he was presented to the Prince Regent, and permitted to dedicate his translation to him. The work appeared, and of course delighted the gay and jovial circle at Carlton House; Moore thus obtained the requisite start in London society, and his own wit and social tact accomplished the rest. Through Lord Moira's interest he was appointed, in 1803, to the Registrarship of the Bermudas. But he could not long endure the solitude and storms of the "vexed Bermoothes," and, leaving his office to be discharged by a deputy, he returned, after a tour in the United States, to England. Some of his prettiest lyrics, *e. g.* the *Indian Bark* and the *Lake of the Dismal Swamp*,

are memorials of this American journey. In the poems of *Corruption*, *Intolerance*, and *The Sceptic*, published in 1808 and 1809, he tried his hand at moral satire, in imitation of Pope. But the *rôle* of a *censor morum* was ill suited to the cheerful, convivial temper of Tom Moore; and, though there are plenty of witty and stinging lines in these satires *, they achieved no great success. The true bent of his genius was to lyrical composition; and in writing the *Irish Melodies*, or, to speak more correctly, in adapting words to those melodies, — a task spread over twenty-seven years, from 1807 to 1834,— his talents, no less than his deepest feelings, found the fittest possible medium for their development. He wrote his *Sacred Songs* in 1816. *Lalla Rookh*, consisting of four Oriental tales, united by a slight connecting framework, appeared in 1817. Though unsuccessful in moral or general satire, Moore came out most effectively in the departments of political and personal satire. His *Epistles*, and *The Fudge Family in Paris*, are incomparable in their kind. In his later years Moore took to prose writing; compiled the *Life of Sheridan* (1825), and the *Life and Letters of Lord Byron* (1830); and also produced the *Epicurean*, a *History of Ireland*, the *Memoirs of Captain Rock*, and the *Travels of an Irish Gentleman in search of a Religion*. His mind, like Southey's, was gone for several years before his death, which occurred in 1852.

Prose Writers, 1800—1850.

We can give only the briefest summary of what has been done in the principal departments of prose writing during this period. In Prose Fiction, besides the Waverley

* For instance —

"But bees, on flowers alighting, cease their hum;
So, settling upon places, Whigs grow dumb."

novels, which have been already noticed, must be specified Jane Austen's admirable tales of common life — *Pride and Prejudice, Mansfield Park, Northanger Abbey,* &c. — which their beautiful and too short-lived authoress commenced as a sort of protest against the romantic and extravagant nonsense of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, and Miss Edgeworth's hardly less admirable stories of Irish life and character. In Oratory, though this period falls far below that which preceded it, we may name the speeches of Canning, Sheil, O'Connell, and Sir Robert Peel. In political writing and pamphleteering, the chief names are — William Cobbett, with his strong sense and English heartiness, author of the *Englishman's Register* — Scott (whose political squib — the *Letters of Malachi Malagrowther* — had the effect of arresting the progress of a measure upon which the ministry had resolved) — Southey—and Sydney Smith. In Journalism, the present period witnessed the growth of a great and vital change, whereby the most influential portion of a newspaper is no longer, as it was in the days of Junius, the columns containing the letters of well-informed correspondents, but the leading articles representing the opinions of the newspaper itself. In prose satire, the inexhaustible yet kindly wit of Sydney Smith has furnished us with some incomparable productions; witness his *Letters to Archdeacon Singleton*, his articles on Christianity in Hindostan, and his letter to the *Times* on Pennsylvanian repudiation. In History, we have the unfinished Roman history of Arnold, the Greek histories of Mitford, Thirlwall, and Grote, the English history of Lingard, and the work similarly named (though "History of the Revolution and of the Reign of William III." would be an exacter title) by Lord Macaulay. In Biography, — out of a countless array of works, — may be particularised the lives of Scott, Wilberforce, and Arnold, compiled respectively by Lockhart, the brothers Archdeacon Wilberforce and the Bishop of Oxford, and Dr.

Stanley. As to other works subsidiary to history,—such as accounts of Voyages and Travels, — their name is legion; yet perhaps none of their authors has achieved a literary distinction comparable to that which was conferred on Lamartine by his *Voyage en Orient.* In Theology, we have the works of Robert Hall and Rowland Hill, representing the dissenting and Low Church sections; those of Arnold, Whately, and Hampden, representing what are sometimes called Broad Church, or Liberal, opinions; those of Froude, Pusey, Davison, Keble, Sewell, &c., representing various sections of the great High Church party; and lastly, those of Milner, Dr. Doyle — the incomparable "J. K. L." —Wiseman, and Newman, on the side of the Catholics. In Philosophy, we have the metaphysical fragments of Coleridge, the ethical philosophy of Bentham, the logic of Whately and Mill, and the political economy of the last-mentioned writers, and also Ricardo and Harriet Martineau. Among the essay-writers, must be singled out Charles Lamb, author of the *Essays of Elia*, which appeared in 1823. In other departments of thought and theory, *e. g.* Criticism, we have the literary criticism of Hazlitt and Thackeray, and the Art-criticism of Mr. Ruskin.

CRITICAL SECTION

CRITICAL SECTION.

CHAPTER I.

POETRY.

Definition of Literature — Classification of Poetical Compositions.

English literature is now to be considered under that which is its natural and legitimate arrangement; that arrangement, namely, of which the principle is, not sequence in time, but affinity in subject; and which aims, by comparing together works of the same kind, to arrive with greater ease and certainty than is possible by the chronological method, at a just estimate of their relative merits. To effect this critical aim, it is evident that a classification of the works which compose a literature is an essential prerequisite. This we shall now proceed to do. With the critical process, for which the proposed classification is to serve as the foundation, we shall, in the present work, be able to make but scanty progress. Some portions of it we shall attempt, with the view rather of illustrating the conveniences of the method, than of seriously undertaking to fill in the vast outline which will be furnished by the classification.

First of all, what is literature? In the most extended sense of the word, it may be taken for the whole written thought of man; and in the same acceptation a national literature is the whole written thought of a particular nation. But this definition is too wide for our present

purpose; it would include such books as *Fearne on Contingent Remainders*, and such periodicals as the *Lancet*, or the *Shipping Gazette*. If the student of literature were called upon to examine the stores of thought and knowledge which the different professions have collected and published, each for the use of its own members, his task would be endless. We must abstract, therefore, all works addressed, owing to the specialty of their subject-matter, to particular classes of men; *e.g.*, law books, medical books, works on moral theology, rubrical works, &c., — in short, all strictly professional literature. Again, the above definition would include all scientific works, which would be practically inconvenient, and would tend to obscure the really marked distinction that exists between literature and science. We must further abstract, therefore, all works in which the words are used as ciphers or signs for the purpose of communicating objective truth, not as organs of the writer's personality. All strictly scientific works are thus excluded. In popularised science, exemplified by such books as the *Architecture of the Heavens*, or the *Vestiges of the Natural History of the Creation*, the personal element comes into play; such books are, therefore, rightly classed as literature. What remains after these deductions is literature in the strict or narrower sense; that is, the assemblage of those works which are neither addressed to particular classes, nor use words merely as the signs of *things*, but which, treating of subjects that interest man as man, and using words as the vehicles and exponents of *thoughts*, appeal to the general human intellect and to the common human heart.

Literature, thus defined, may be divided into —

1. Poetry.
2. Prose writings.

For the present, we shall confine our attention to Poetry. The subject is so vast as not to be easily

manageable, and many of the different kinds slide into each other by such insensible gradations, that any classification must be to a certain extent arbitrary; still the following division may, perhaps, be found useful: — Poetry may be classed under eleven designations, — 1. Epic, 2. Dramatic, 3. Heroic, 4. Narrative, 5. Didactic, 6. Satirical and Humorous, 7. Descriptive and Pastoral, 8. Lyrical (including ballads and sonnets), 9. Elegiac, 10. Epistles, 11. Miscellaneous Poems; —the latter class including all those pieces, — very numerous in modern times — which cannot be conveniently referred to any of the former heads, but which we shall endeavour further to subdivide upon some rational principle.

Epic Poetry: — "Paradise Lost"; Minor Epic Poems.

The epic poem has ever been regarded as in its nature the most noble of all poetic performances. Its essential properties were laid down by Aristotle in the Poetics more than two thousand years ago, and they have not varied since. For, as Pope says,—

> "These rules of old, discovered not devised,
> Are nature still, but nature methodized."

The subject of the epic poem must be some one, great, complex action. The principal personages must belong to the high places of society, and must be grand and elevated in their ideas. The measure must be of a sonorous dignity befitting the subject. The action is developed by a mixture of dialogue, soliloquy, and narrative. Briefly to express its main requisites,—the epic poem treats of one great, complex action, in a grand style, and with fulness of detail.

English literature possesses one great epic poem,— Milton's *Paradise Lost.* Not a few of our poets have wooed the epic muse; and the results are seen in such

poems as Cowley's *Davideis*, Blackmore's *Prince Arthur*, Glover's *Leonidas*, and Wilkie's *Epigoniad*. But these productions do not deserve a serious examination. The *Leonidas*, which is in blank verse, possesses a certain rhetorical dignity, but has not enough of variety and poetic truth to interest deeply any but juvenile readers. Pope's translation of the *Iliad* may in a certain sense be called an English epic; for while it would be vain to seek in it for the true Homeric spirit and manner, the translator has, in compensation, adorned it with many excellences of his own. It abounds with passages which notably illustrate Pope's best qualities; — his wonderful intellectual vigour, his terseness, brilliancy, and ingenuity. But we shall have other and better opportunities of noticing these characteristics of that great poet.

The first regular criticism on the *Paradise Lost* is found in the *Spectator*, in a series of articles written by Addison. Addison compares Milton's poem to the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*, first with respect to choice of subject, secondly to the mode of treatment, and in both particulars he gives the palm to Milton.

Dr. Johnson, in his Life of Milton, speaks in more discriminating terms: —

"The defects and faults of *Paradise Lost* — for faults and defects every work of man must have — it is the business of impartial criticism to discover. As, in displaying the excellence of Milton, I have not made long quotations, because of selecting beauties there had been no end, I shall in the same general manner mention that which seems to deserve censure; for what Englishman can take delight in transcribing passages, which, if they lessen the reputation of Milton, diminish in some degree the honour of our country?"

Coleridge, in his *Literary Remains*, gives a criticism of the *Paradise Lost*, parts of which are valuable. He appears to rank Milton as an epic poet above Homer and

above Dante. Lastly, Mr. Hallam, in his *History of European Literature*, while he does not fail to point out several defects in the *Paradise Lost*, which Addison and other critics had overlooked, yet inclines to place the poem, as a whole, above the *Divina Commedia* of Dante.

In our examination of the poem, we shall consider,— 1. the choice of subject; 2. the artistic structure of the work; 3. details in the mode of treatment, whether relating to personages, or events, or poetical scenery; 4. the style, metre, and language of the poem.

1. With regard to the choice of subject, it has been repeatedly commended in the highest terms. Coleridge, for instance, says, "In Homer, the supposed importance of the subject, as the first effort of confederated Greece, is an afterthought of the critics; and the interest, such as it is, derived from the events themselves, as distinguished from the manner of representing them, is very languid to all but Greeks. It is a Greek poem. The superiority of the *Paradise Lost* is obvious in this respect, that the interest transcends the limits of a nation."

There cannot, of course, be two opinions with regard to the importance and universal interest of the subject of the *Paradise Lost*, considered in itself; but whether it is a surpassingly good subject for an epic poem is a different question. One obvious difficulty connected with it is its brevity and deficiency in incident: it is not sufficiently *complex*. Compare the subjects chosen by Homer, Virgil, and Tasso. The Wrath of Achilles,— its causes,— its consequences,— its implacability in spite of the most urgent entreaties,— its final appeasement, and the partial reparation of the calamities to which it had led, form one entire whole, the developement of which admits of an inexhaustible variety in the management of the details. Similarly, the settlement of Æneas in Italy, involving an account, by way of episode, in the 2nd and 3rd books of the *Æneid*, of the circumstances under which he had been

driven from Troy, with a description of the obstacles which were interposed to that settlement, whether by divine or human agency, and of the means by which those obstacles were finally overcome, and the end foreshadowed from the commencement attained,—this subject again, though forming one whole, and capable of being embraced in a single complex conception, presents an indefinite number of parts and incidents suitable for poetic treatment. In both cases, tradition supplied the poet with a large original stock of materials, upon which again his imagination was free to re-act, and either invent, modify, or suppress, according to the requirements of his art. In Tasso's great epic, the subject of which is the triumphant conclusion of the first Crusade, and the deliverance of Jerusalem from the unbelievers, the materials are evidently so abundant that the poet's skill has to be exercised in selection rather than in expansion. Now, let us see how the case stands with regard to Milton's subject. Here the materials consist of the first three chapters in the book of Genesis, and a few verses in the Apocalypse; there is absolutely nothing more. But it may be said that, as Tasso has invented many incidents, and Virgil also, so Milton had full liberty to amplify, out of the resources of his own imagination, the brief and simple notices by which Scripture conveys the narrative of the Fall of Man. Here, however, his subject hampers him, and rightly so. The subjects taken by Virgil and Tasso fall within the range of ordinary human experience; whatever they might invent, therefore, in addition to the materials which they had to their hands, provided it were conceived with true poetic feeling, and were of a piece with the other portions of the poem, would be strictly homogeneous with the entire subject-matter. But the nature of Milton's subject did not allow him this liberty of amplification and expansion. That which is recorded of the fall of man forms a unique

chapter in history; all experience presents us with nothing like it; and the danger is, lest if we add anything of our own to the narration — so brief, so apparently simple, yet withal so profoundly mysterious,—which is presented to us in Holy Writ, we at last, without intending it, produce something quite unlike our original. Whether Milton has succeeded in avoiding this danger is a point which we shall consider presently; but that he felt the difficulty is clear, for he has avoided as much as possible inventing any new incident, and, to gain the length required for an epic poem, has introduced numerous long dialogues and descriptive passages.

2. The internal structure of this poem, as a work of art, has been admired by more than one distinguished critic. There is, Coleridge observes, a *totality* observable in the *Paradise Lost:* — it has a definite beginning, middle, and end, such as few other epic poems can boast of. The first line of the poem speaks of the disobedience of our first parents; the evil power which led them to disobey is then referred to; and the circumstances of its revolt and overthrow are briefly given. The steps by which Satan proceeds on his mission of temptation are described in the second and third books. In the fourth, Adam and Eve are first introduced. Part of the fifth, the sixth, seventh, and eighth books, are episodical, and contain the story in detail of the war in heaven between the good and the rebel angels, the final overthrow and expulsion of the latter, and the creation of the earth and man. All this is related to Adam by the angel Raphael, to serve him by way of warning, lest he also should fall into the sin of disobedience and revolt. In the ninth book occurs the account of the actual transgression. In the tenth we have the sentence pronounced, and some of the immediate consequences of the fall described. The greater part of the eleventh and twelfth books is another episode, being the unfolding to Adam, by the Archangel Michael, partly in

vision, partly by way of narrative, of the future fortunes of his descendants. At the end of the twelfth book we have the expulsion of Adam and Eve out of Paradise, with which the poem naturally closes.

The *Paradise Lost* thus forms one connected whole, and it is worked out with great vigour and carefulness of treatment throughout. Many passages, especially at the beginnings of the books, have a character of unsurpassed dignity and sublimity; the language, though often rough or harsh, and sometimes grammatically faulty, is never feeble or wordy; and a varied learning supplies the poet with abundant materials for simile and illustration. Still the difficulty before mentioned, as inherent in the choice of the subject, seems to extend its evil influence over the structure of the poem. The fact of his materials being so scanty obliged Milton to have recourse to episodes; hence the long narratives of Raphael and Michael. Through nearly six entire books, out of the twelve of which the poem is composed, the main action is interrupted and in suspense; — a thing which it is difficult to justify upon any rules of poetic art. For what is an episode? It is a story within a story; it is to an epic poem what a parenthesis is to a sentence; — and just as a parenthesis, unless carefully managed, and kept within narrow limits, is likely to obscure the meaning of the main sentence; so an episode, if too long, or unskilfully dovetailed into the rest of the work, is apt to introduce a certain confusion into an epic poem. Let us observe the manner in which the father of poetry,— he who, in the words of Horace, —

——"nil molitur ineptè;"

of whom Pope says,*

"Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring,"

* *Essay on Criticism*, I.

— let us see how far Homer indulges in episode. The use of the episode is twofold: it serves either to make known to the reader events antecedent or subsequent in time to the action of the piece, or to describe contemporary matters, which, though connected with, are not essential to, and do not help forward, the main action. A long narrative of what is past, and a long prophecy of what is to come, are therefore both alike episodical: of the former we have an example in the second and third books of the *Æneid*; of the latter, in the eleventh and twelfth books of the *Paradise Lost*. As an instance of the contemporary episode, we may take the story of Olinda and Sofronio, in the second canto of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*. Now Homer, although in the *Iliad* he informs us of many circumstances connected with the siege of Troy which had happened before the date when the poem commences, seems purposely to avoid communicating them in a formal episode. He scatters and interweaves these notices of past events in the progress of the main action so naturally, yet with such perfection of art, that he gains the same object which is the pretext for historical episodes with other poets, but without that interruption and suspension of the main design, which, however skilfully managed, seem hardly consistent with epical perfection. Thus Achilles, in the long speech in the ninth book to the envoys, who are entreating him to succour the defeated Greeks, introduces, without effort, an account of much of the previous history of the great siege. So again Diomede, in the second book, when dissuading the Greeks from embarking and returning home, refers naturally to the events which occurred at Aulis before the expedition started, in a few lines, which, as it were, present to us the whole theory of the siege in the clearest light. Homer, therefore, strictly speaking, avoids in the *Iliad* the use of the episode altogether. Virgil, on the other hand, adopts it; the second and third books of the

Æneid are an episodical narrative, in which Æneas relates to Dido the closing scenes at Troy, and his own subsequent adventures in the Mediterranean. Tasso uses the episode very sparingly, and prefers the contemporary to the historical form. But when we come to the *Paradise Lost*, we find that nearly half the poem is episodical. Several disadvantages hence arise. First of all, the fact implies a defect in point of art; since the action or story developed either in a dramatic or an epic poem ought to be so important and so complete in itself as not to require the introduction of explanatory or decorative statements nearly as long as the progressive portions of the poem. If the episode be explanatory, it proves that the story is not sufficiently clear, simple, and complete, for epic purposes; if decorative, that it is not important enough to engross the reader's attention without the addition of extraneous matter. In either case, the art is defective. Again, this arrangement is the source of confusion and obscurity. A reader not very well acquainted with the peculiar structure of the poem, opens the *Paradise Lost* at hazard, and finds himself, to his astonishment,—in a work whose subject is the loss of Paradise,—carried back to the creation of light, or forward to the building of the tower of Babel.

3. We are now to consider in some detail how Milton has treated his subject; how he has dealt with the difficulties which seem inherent in the selection. A certain degree of amplification — the materials being so scanty — was unavoidable; — has he managed the amplification successfully? In some instances, he certainly has; for example, in the account of the temptation of Eve, in the ninth book, the logic of which is very ingeniously wrought out by supposing the serpent to ascribe his power of speech and newly-awakened intelligence to the effects of partaking of the fruit of the forbidden tree; and by putting into his mouth various plausible arguments designed to satisfy

Eve as to the motives of the Divine prohibition. But in other passages we cannot but think that the amplification has been most unsuccessful. For example, take the war in heaven. In the Apocalypse (ch. xii.) it is mentioned in these few words: "And there was a great battle in heaven; Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels: and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who seduceth the whole world: and he was cast unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." Such, and no more than this, was the knowledge imparted in prophetic vision to the inspired apostle in Patmos regarding these supernatural events. Milton has expanded this brief text marvellously; the narrative of the revolt and war in heaven takes up two entire books. And strange work indeed he has made of it! The actual material swords and spears,—the invention of cannons, cannon-balls, and gunpowder by the rebel angels, — the grim puritanical pleasantry which is put in the mouth of Satan when first making proof of this notable discovery, just such as one might fancy issuing from the lips of Cromwell or Ireton on giving orders to batter down a cathedral, — the hurling of mountains at one another by the adverse hosts, a conceit borrowed from Greek mythology and the wars of the Titans against the gods, —

> "Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam
> Scilicet, atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum;"

lastly, the vivid description, exceedingly fine and poetical in its way, of the chariot of the Messiah going forth to battle, drawn by four cherubic shapes, — all this, though fitting and appropriate enough, if the subject were the gods of Olympus or of Valhalla, grates discordantly upon our feelings when it is presented as a suitable picture of that

true and stupendous event which we call the Fall of the Angels, and as an expansion of the particulars recorded in the sacred text. In truth, Milton is nowhere so solemn and impressive as in those passages where he reproduces almost *verbatim* the exact words of Scripture, *e. g.* in the passage in the tenth book, describing the judgment passed upon man after his transgression. Where he gives the freest play to his invention, the result is least happy. The dialogues in heaven, to say nothing of the undisguised Arianism which disfigures them, are either painful or simply absurd, according as one regards them seriously or not. Pope, whose discernment nothing escaped, has touched this weak point in his *Imitations of Horace.** Hallam himself has admitted that a certain grossness and materialism attach to Milton's heaven and heavenly inhabitants, far unlike the pure and ethereal colours with which Dante invests the angels and blessed spirits presented in his *Paradiso.*

Turning now to the personal element in the poem, we find, as Johnson shows at length, that as the subject chosen is beyond the sphere of human experience, so the characters described are deficient in human interest. So far as this is not the case, it arises from Milton having broken through the trammels which the fundamental conditions of his subject imposed on him. Of all the personages in the *Paradise Lost*, there is none whose proceedings interest us, and even whose sufferings engage our sympathies, like those of Satan. But this is because he is not represented as the Bible represents him—namely, as the type and essential principle of all that is evil and hateful. There seems to be a conflict in the mind of Milton between the Scriptural type of Satan and the Greek conception of Prometheus. The fallen archangel, driven from heaven and doomed to everlasting misery by superior power, yet with will unconquered and unconquer-

* "In quibbles angel and archangel join," &c.

able, cannot but recall the image of the mighty Titan chained to the rock by the vengeance of Jove, yet unalterably defiant and erect in soul. It is clear that the character of Satan had greater charms for Milton's imagination, and is therefore presented more prominently, and worked out with more care, than any other in the poem. Devoted himself to the cause of insurrection on earth, he sympathises against his will with the author of rebellion in heaven. Against his will; for he seems to be well aware and to be continually reminding himself that Satan ought to be represented as purely evil, yet he constantly places language in his mouth which is inconsistent with such a conception. For instance: —

> "Yet not for those,
> Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
> Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
> Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind
> And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
> That with the mightiest urged me to contend."

Is not this much more like Shelley's Prometheus than the Satan of the Bible? It has been often said, and it seems true, that the hero or prominent character of the *Paradise Lost* is Satan. Throughout the first three books the attention is fixed upon his proceedings. Even after Adam and Eve are introduced, which is not till the fourth book, the main interest centres upon him; for they are passive—he is active; they are the subjects of plots—he the framer of them; they, living on without any definite aim, are represented as falling from their happy state through weakness, and in a sort of helpless predestined manner (we speak, of course, of Milton's representation only, not of the Fall as it was in itself); while he is fixed to one object, fertile in expedients, courageous in danger, and, on the whole, successful in his enterprise. Clearly, Satan is the hero of the *Paradise Lost*. And, apart from the incongruity referred to, the character is

drawn in such grand outlines, and presents such a massive strength and sublimity, as none but a great poet could have portrayed. The following lines describe him, when marshalling the hosts of his followers :—

"He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower; his form had not yet lost
All its original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruin'd, and the excess
Of glory obscured; as when the sun, new risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all th' archangel."

He consoles himself for his banishment from heaven with reflections worthy of a Stoic philosopher : —

——"Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors, hail,
Infernal world, and thou profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor; one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time:
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be; all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy; will not drive us hence;
Here we may reign secure, and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell;
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven."

In much of the portraiture of Adam, Milton seems to be unconsciously describing himself. His manly beauty, his imperious claim to absolute rule over the weaker sex, the grasp of his intellect, and the delight he feels in its exercise, his strength of will, yet susceptibility to the influence of female charms, — all these characteristics, assigned by the poet to Adam, are well known to have in an

eminent degree belonged to himself. Eve, on the other hand, is represented as a soft, yielding, fascinating being, who, with all her attractions, is, in moral and intellectual things, rather a hindrance than a help to her nobler consort; — and there are many suppressed taunts and thinly-veiled allusions, which, while they illustrate Milton's contempt for the sex, and somewhat oriental view of woman's relation to man, can scarcely be misunderstood as glancing at his own domestic trials. To illustrate what has been said, we will quote a few passages. The first is one of surpassing beauty: —

> "Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
> God-like erect, with native honour clad,
> In naked majesty, seem'd lords of all;
> And worthy seem'd; for in their looks divine
> The image of their glorious Maker shone:
> * * * * * * *
> For contemplation he and valour formed;
> For softness she, and sweet attractive grace;
> He for God only, she for God in him:
> His fair large front and eye sublime declared
> Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
> Round from his parted forelock manly hung
> Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad." (Book iv.)

Eve thus unfolds her conception of the relation in which she stands to Adam: —

> "To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorn'd:
> 'My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st
> Unargued I obey; so God ordains;
> God is thy law, thou mine;—to know no more
> Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.'" (Ibid.)

Adam, while expressing the same view, owns the invincibility of woman's charm: —

> "For well I understand in the prime end
> Of nature her the inferior, in the mind
> And inward faculties, which most excel;
> In outward also her resembling less
> His image who made both, and less expressing

The character of that dominion given
O'er other creatures; yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows." (Book viii.)

Even in the Fall, his superior intellect asserts itself: —

——" He scrupled not to eat
Against his better knowledge; not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm." (Book ix.)

Is there not, again, a touch of autobiography in the reproaches which Adam heaps upon Eve in the following lines? —

——" This mischief had not then befallen,
And more that shall befall; innumerable
Disturbances on earth through female snares;
And straight conjunction with this sex; for either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
By a far worse;" &c. (Book x.)

Eve's beautiful submission makes her stern lord relent. It is well known that Milton's first wife, in similar suppliant guise, appeased his resentment, and obtained her pardon: —

" She ended weeping; and her lowly plight
Immovable, till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration; soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
Now at his feet submissive in distress." (Ibid.)

The seraph Abdiel is one of the grandest of poetic creations. Led away, at first, in the ranks of the rebel angels, he recoils with horror when he learns the full

scope of their revolt, and returns to the courts of heaven: —

"So spake the seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal:
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought
To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
And with retorted scorn, his back he turned
On those proud towers to swift destruction doomed." (Book v.)

By *poetical scenery* is meant the imaginary framework in space in which the poem is set, — the stage with its accessories, on which the characters move, and the action is performed. In the *Paradise Lost*, as in the *Divina Commedia*, this is no narrower than the entire compass of the heavens and the earth. But there is a remarkable difference between them, which, in point of art, operates to the disadvantage of the English poet. In the 14th century no one doubted the truth of the Ptolemaic system, and Dante's astronomy is as stable and self-consistent as his theology. The earth is motionless at the centre; round it, fixed in concentric spheres, revolve the "seven planets," of which the Moon is the first and the Sun the fourth; enclosing these follow in succession the sphere of the fixed stars, that of the empyrean, and that described as the *primum mobile*. The geography of the Inferno, an abyss in the form of an inverted cone, extending downwards in successive steps to the centre of the earth, and that of the Purgatorio, a mountain at the Antipodes, rising in the form of a proper cone by similar steps, till the summit is reached whence purified souls are admitted to the lowest sphere of the Paradiso, are equally logical and distinct. But in the 17th century the Copernican

system was rapidly gaining the belief of all intelligent men, and Milton, in his poem, wavers between the old astronomy and the new. In the first three books the Ptolemaic system prevails; upon any other, Satan's expedition in search of the new-created earth becomes unintelligible. After struggling through Chaos he lands upon the outermost of the spheres that enclose the earth:—

> "Meanwhile, upon the firm opacous globe
> Of this round world, whose first convex divides
> The luminous inferior orbs, enclosed
> From Chaos and the inroad of darkness old,
> Satan alighted walks." (Book iii.)

Hither "fly all things transitory and vain;" hither come the "eremites and friars" whom Milton regards with true Puritanic aversion, and those who thought to make sure of Paradise by putting on the Franciscan or Dominican habit on their death-bed:—

> "They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
> And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
> The trepidation talked, and that first moved."

On his way down from hence to the earth, Satan, still in accordance with the Ptolemaic system, passes through the fixed stars and visits the sun. But in subsequent parts of the poem an astronomy is suggested which revolutionises the face of the universe, and gives us the uncomfortable feeling that all that has gone before is unreal. The stability of the earth is first questioned in the fourth book:—

> ——"Uriel to his charge
> Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
> Bore him slope downward to the sun, now fallen
> Beneath the Azores; whether the prime orb,
> Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
> Diurnal, *or this less volubil earth,*
> *By shorter flight to the east, had left him there.*"

In the eighth book, Adam questions Raphael as to the

celestial motions, but is doubtfully answered; upon either theory, he is told, the goodness and wisdom of God can be justified; yet the archangel's words imply some preference for the Copernican system:

——"What if the sun
Be centre to the world, and other stars,
By his attractive virtue and their own
Incited, dance about him various rounds?
* * * * * * *
Or save the sun his labour, and that swift
Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb supposed,
Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
Of day and night; *which needs not thy belief,*
If earth, industrious of herself, fetch day
Travelling east, and with her part averse
From the sun's beam meet night ——"

4. It remains to say a few words upon the style, metre, and language of the poem. The grandeur, pregnancy, and nobleness of the first are indisputable. It is, however, often rugged or harsh, owing to the frequency of defects in the versification. It is distinguished by the great length of the sentences; the thread of thought winding on through many a parenthesis or subordinate clause, now involving, now evolving itself, yet always firmly grasped, and resulting in grammar as sound as the intellectual conception is distinct. This quality of style is perhaps attributable to Milton's blindness; he could not write down as he composed, nor could an amanuensis be always at hand; he therefore may have acted on the principle that one long sentence is more easily remembered than two or three short ones.

A series of admirable papers upon Milton's versification may be found in Johnson's *Rambler*. To it the reader is referred, the subject being not of a kind to admit of cursory treatment.

The language of the poem does not come up to the

standard of the purest English writers of the period. It is difficult to understand how Milton, having the works of Bacon, Shakspeare, and Hooker before him, could think himself justified in using the strange and barbarous Latinisms which disfigure the *Paradise Lost*. Such terms as "procinct," "battalious," "parle," and such usages, or rather usurpations, of words, as "frequent" in the sense of "crowded," "pontifical" in the sense of "bridge-making," "obvious" for "meeting," "dissipation" for "dispersion," and "pretended" for "drawn before" (Lat. *prætentus*), were never employed by English writers before Milton, and have never been employed since.

Nor does he import Latin words only, but Latin, and even Greek, constructions. Examples of Greek idioms are, "And knew not eating death," and "O miserable of happy" (*ἄθλιος ἐκ μακαρίου*). Latin idioms occur frequently, and sometimes cause obscurity, because, through the absence of inflexions in English, the same collocation of words which is perfectly clear in Latin is often capable of two or three different meanings in English. A few examples are subjoined: — "Or hear'st thou rather" (*i. e.* would'st thou rather be addressed as) "pure ethereal stream:" — "Of pure, now purer air Meets his approach;" — "So as not either to provoke, or dread New war provoked" (where it is not clear at first sight whether "provoked" should be rendered by "*provocatum*" or "*lacessitos*"); — "How camest thou speakable of mute;" &c.

After all, it is easy to be hypercritical in these matters. The defence, however, of such a minute analysis lies in the fact of its being exercised on a work truly great. We notice the flaws in a diamond because it is a diamond. No one would take the trouble to point out the grammatical or metrical slips in Blackmore's *Creation*. It is from the conviction that the renown of the *Paradise Lost* is, and deserves to be, imperishable, that critics do not

fear to show that the blind, indiscriminate admiration with which the poem is often regarded is misplaced. Of the father of poetry himself it was said —

—"Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus."

In a note are given a few passages from the poem, which have passed into proverbs, current sayings, or standard quotations.*

Dramatic Poetry: Its Kinds; Shakspeare, Addison, Ben Jonson, Milton.

Invented by the Greeks, the drama attained in their hands a perfection which it has never since surpassed. To them we owe the designations of Tragedy and Comedy, the definitions of each kind according to its nature and end, and the division into acts. The leading characteristics of dramatic composition have remained unaltered ever since; but the Greek definition of Tragedy was gradually restricted, that of Comedy enlarged, so that it became necessary to invent other names for intermediate or inferior kinds. With the Greeks, a tragedy meant "the representation of a serious, complete, and important

* "Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen."

"With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded:"—

——"At whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads;" —

"Not to know me, argues yourselves unknown;"—

——"Still govern thou my song,
Urania, and *fit audience find, though few.*"

——"With a smile that glowed
Celestial rosy red" —

"And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delayed to strike."

action," and might involve a transition from calamity to prosperity, as well as from prosperity to calamity.* By a comedy was meant a representation, tending to excite laughter, of mean and ridiculous actions. Thus the *Eumenides* of Æschylus, the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, and the *Alcestis, Helena*, and others of Euripides, though called tragedies, do not end *tragically* in the modern sense, but the reverse. But by degrees it came to be considered that every tragedy must have a disastrous catastrophe, so that a new term — tragi-comedy — which seems to have first arisen in Spain, was invented to suit those dramas in which, though the main action was serious, the conclusion was happy. As Tragedy assumed a narrower meaning, Comedy obtained one proportionably more extensive. Of this a notable illustration is found in Dante, who named his great poem *La Commedia*, to mark his feeling that it was in a style lower than the epic, and yet not a tragedy, because it ended happily. In England, the term Comedy was used all through the Elizabethan age in a loose sense, which would embrace anything between a tragi-comedy and a farce. Thus the *Merchant of Venice* is reckoned among the *comedies* of Shakspeare, though, except for the admixture of comic matter in the minor characters, it is, in the Greek sense, just as much a tragedy as the *Alcestis*. In the seventeenth century, the term began to be restricted to plays in which comic or satirical matter preponderated. A shorter and more unpretending species, in one or at most two acts, in which any sort of contrivance or trick was permissible in order to raise a laugh, so that the action were not taken out of the sphere of real life, was invented under the name of Farce in the eighteenth century.

The best and most characteristic of English plays belong to what is called the *Romantic* drama. The Classical and the Romantic drama represent two prevalent modes of thought, or streams of opinion, which, parting

* Aristot. *Poet.* 6.

from each other and becoming strongly contrasted soon after the revival of letters, have ever since contended for the empire of the human mind in Europe. The readers of Mr. Ruskin's striking books will have learnt a great deal about these modes of thought, and will, perhaps, have imbibed too unqualified a dislike for the one, and reverence for the other. Referring those who desire a full exposition to the pages of that eloquent writer, we must be content with saying here, that the Classical drama was cast in the Græco-Roman mould, and subjected to the rules of construction (the dramatic unities) which the ancient dramatists observed; its authors being generally men who were deeply imbued with the classical spirit, to a degree which made them recoil with aversion and contempt from the spirit and the products of the ages that had intervened between themselves and the antiquity which they loved. On the other hand, the Romantic drama, though it borrowed much of its formal part (*e. g.* the division into acts, the prologue and epilogue, the occasional choruses, &c.) from the ancients, was founded upon and grew out of the Romance literature of the middle ages, — its authors being generally imbued with the spirit of Christian Europe, such as the mingled influences of Christianity and feudalism had formed it. National before all, — writing for audiences in whom taste and fine intelligence were scantily developed, but in whom imagination and feeling were strong, and faith habitual, the dramatists of this school were led to reject the strict rules of which Athenian culture exacted the observance. To gratify the national pride of their hearers, they dramatised large portions of their past history, and in so doing scrupled not to violate the unity of action. They observed, indeed, this rule in their tragedies—at least in the best of them — but utterly disregarded the minor unities of time and place, because they knew that they could trust to the imagination of their hearers to supply any shortcomings in the external illusion. In the play

of *Macbeth* many years elapse, and the scene is shifted from Scotland to England and back again without the smallest hesitation. The result is, that Art gains in one way and loses in another. We are spared the tedious narratives which are rendered necessary in the classical drama by the strict limits of time within which the action is bounded. On the other hand, the impression produced, being less concentrated, is usually feebler and less determinate.

It would be a waste of time to enter here, in that cursory way which alone our limits would allow, into any critical discussion of the dramatic genius of Shakspeare. The greatest modern critics in all countries have undertaken the task, — a fact sufficient of itself to dispense us from the attempt. Among the numerous treatises, large and small — by Coleridge, Hazlitt, Mrs. Jameson, Guizot, Tieck, Schlegel, Ulrici, &c. — each containing much that is valuable, we would single out Guizot's as embodying, in the most compact and convenient form, the results of the highest criticism on Shakspeare himself, on his time, and on his work.

[At this point the student is recommended to read *King Lear*, or some other of the great tragedies; *Richard III.* or *Henry V.* as a specimen of the Histories, and *As You Like It*, or the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, as a specimen of the Comedies.*]

Our literature possesses but few dramas of the Classical school, and those not of the highest order. The most celebrated specimen, perhaps, is Addison's *Cato*. But weak and prosaic lines abound in it, such as

> "Cato, I 've orders to expostulate;"

or,

> "Why will you rive my heart with such expressions?"

* It is intended to bring out shortly an edition, with notes by the author, of the three plays, *King Lear*, *Henry V.*, and *As You Like It.*

and the scenes between the lovers are stiff and frigid. Yet the play is not without fine passages; as when the noble Roman, who has borne unmoved the tidings of the death of his son, weeps over the anticipated ruin of his country: —

> "'Tis Rome requires our tears;
> The mistress of the world, the seat of empire,
> The nurse of heroes, the delight of gods,
> That humbled the proud tyrants of the earth,
> And set the nations free,—Rome is no more!"

On the whole, Cato's character is finely drawn, and well adapted to call forth the powers of a first-rate actor. His soliloquy at the end, beginning

> "It must be so;—Plato, thou reasonest well," &c.,

has been justly praised.

The plays of Ben Jonson belong in form to the classical school, since, as he likes to boast, the unities are preserved in them. But his acquaintance with antiquity simply made him a pedant; no man had ever less of the classical spirit.

Milton's *Samson Agonistes* is constructed upon the model of a Greek tragedy. The choral parts are written in an irregular metre, which, however, is full of harmony. Though not suited for representation before an average audience, and though the laboured, compressed diction, while it everywhere recalls the great mind of Milton, deviates from any objective standard of beautiful expression, this play is one of those which continually rise upon our judgment. In it the genius of Handel has inseparably linked itself in our conceptions with the verse of Milton.

Heroic Poetry: "The Bruce;" "The Mirrour for Magistrates;" "The Campaign."

As the unity of the epic poem is derived from its being the evolution of one great, complex action, so the unity of the heroic poem proceeds from its being the record of all or some of the great actions of an individual hero. Like the epic, it requires a serious and dignified form of expression; and consequently, in English, employs nearly always, either the heroic couplet, or a stanza of not less than seven lines. Heroic poetry has produced no works of extraordinary merit in any literature. When the hero is living, the registration of his exploits is apt to become fulsome; when dead, tedious. Boileau has perhaps succeeded best; the heroic poems which Addison produced in honour of Marlborough and William III., in hope to emulate the author of the *Epître au Roi*, are mere rant and fustian in comparison. Our earliest heroic poem — *The Bruce* of Barbour * — is, perhaps, the best; but the short romance metre in which it is written much injures its effect. A better specimen of Barbour's style cannot be selected than the often-quoted passage on Freedom: —

"A! fredome is a noble thing!
Fredome mayss man to have liking:
Fredome all solace to man givis;
He livys at ease, that frely livys!
A noble hart may have none ease,
Na ellys nocht that may him please,
Gif fredome failyhe; for fre liking
Is yharnyt † ower all other thing.
Na he, that aye has livyt fre,
May nocht knaw weill the propyrtė,
The angyr, na the wrechyt dome‡,
That is couplyt to foul thyrldome.§
Bat gif he had assayit it,

* See p. 58. † Yearned for. ‡ Wretched doom. § Thraldom.

Then all perquer* he suld it wyt;
And suld think fredome mar to pryss,
Than all the gold in warld that is.
Thus contrar thingis ever mar,
Discoweryngis of the tothir are.†
And he that thryll‡ is, has nocht his:
All that he has embandownyt is
Till § his lord, quhat evir he be,
Yet has he nocht sa mekill fre
As fre wyl to live, or do
That at hys hart hym drawis to."

The Mirrour for Magistrates, or — as it is called in the earlier editions — *The Falles of Princes*, a work of the sixteenth century, was modelled by its authors upon the plan of Boccaccio's popular work *De Casibus*, and contains the "tragical histories" of a number of celebrated Englishmen. The metre is the Chaucerian heptastich, so often before mentioned. But, excepting the portions contributed by Sackville (the Induction, and the story of Buckingham), this vast compilation possesses scarcely more poetical merit than the rhyming chronicles of a former age.

Addison's heroic poem, *The Campaign*, contains the well-known simile of the angel, which called forth the admiration and the munificence of Godolphin. The story runs as follows: — In 1704, shortly after the battle of Blenheim, Godolphin, then Lord Treasurer, happening to meet Lord Halifax, complained that the great victory had not been properly celebrated in verse, and inquired if he knew of any poet to whom this important task could be safely intrusted. Halifax replied that he did indeed know of a gentleman thoroughly competent to discharge this duty, but that the individual he referred to had received of late such scanty recognition of his talents and patriotism, that he doubted if he would be willing to undertake it. Lord Godolphin replied that Lord Halifax might rest

* Perfectly. † Meaning "explain their opposites." ‡ Thrall. § To.

assured, that whoever might be named should not go unrewarded for his trouble. Upon which Halifax named Addison. Godolphin sent a common friend to Addison, who immediately undertook to confer immortality on the Duke of Marlborough. The poem called *The Campaign* was the result. Godolphin saw the manuscript when the poet had got as far as the once celebrated simile of the Angel, which runs thus: —

> "So when an Angel, by divine command,
> With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
> Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
> Calm and serene He drives the furious blast,
> And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm."

Lord Godolphin, it is said*, was so delighted with this not very reverent simile, that he immediately made Addison a Commissioner of Appeals. But this favourable judgment of the poem has been reversed by later criticism. *The Campaign*, taken as a whole, is turgid yet feeble, pretentious yet dull; it has few of the excellencies, and nearly all the faults which heroic verse can have.

Narrative Poetry: — Romances; Tales; Allegories; Romantic Poems; Historical Poems.

Narrative poetry is less determinate in form than any of the preceding kinds. The narrative poem so far resembles the epic, that it also is concerned with a particular sequence of human actions, and permits of the intermixture of dialogue and description. It differs from it, in that it does not require either the strict unity or the intrinsic greatness of the epic action. In the epic, the issue of the action is involved in the fundamental circumstances, and is indicated at the very outset. The first two

* See the *Biographia Britannica.*

lines of the *Iliad* contain the germ or theme which is expanded and illustrated through the twenty-two books which follow. The course of a narrative poem is in general more like that of real life; events occur and are described which have no obvious internal relation either to each other or to some one ground plan; — and a conclusion in which the mind reposes, and desires nothing beyond,— an essential requirement in the epic,— is not to be strictly exacted from the narrative poem. But even if the epic unity of design were observed, the narrative poem would still be distinguishable from the higher kind, either by the inferior greatness of the subject, or by the lower quality of the style. An epic poem, as was said before, treats of one great complex action, in a lofty style, and with fulness of detail. In a narrative poem, it will be invariably found that one of these elements is wanting.

It will be convenient to divide narrative poems into five classes: 1. Romances, 2. Tales, 3. Allegories, 4. Romantic poems, 5. Historical poems.

1. The *Romances*, or Gests, in old English, with which our MS. repositories abound, were mostly translated or imitated from French originals during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. In the former portion of this work a general description was given of these remarkable poems*, so that it is unnecessary here to enter upon any questions connected with their origin or subject-matter. We shall now present the reader with an analysis of a curious romance, not belonging to one of the great cycles, which may serve as a sample of the whole class. It is the romance of Sir Isumbras, and is one of those abridged by Ellis.

Sir Isumbras was rich, virtuous, and happy; but in the pride of his heart he was lifted up, and gradually became forgetful of God. An angel appears to him, and

* See p. 35.

denounces punishment. It is like the story of Job: his horses and oxen are struck dead; his castle burnt down; and many of his servants killed. Then, with his wife and three sons, he sets out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. On the way, the two elder children are carried off, one by a lion, the other by a leopard. At last they come to the "Greekish Sea;" a Saracen fleet sails up; the Soudan is enamoured of the wife, and deprives Sir Isumbras of her by a forced sale, the purchase-money being counted down upon the knight's red mantle. The lady is immediately sent back to the Soudan's dominions in the capacity of Queen. Shortly after this the misery of Sir Isumbras is completed by the abduction of his only remaining son by a unicorn, during a brief interval, in which he was vainly pursuing an eagle which had seized upon the mantle and the gold. In fervent contrition he falls on his knees, and prays to Jesus and the Virgin. He obtains work at a smith's forge, and remains in this employment seven years, during which he forges for himself a suit of armour. A battle between a Christian and a Saracen army takes place not far off; Sir Isumbras takes part in it, and wins the battle by his valour, killing his old acquaintance the Soudan. After his wounds are healed, he takes a scrip and pike, and goes on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Here he stays seven years, in constant labour, mortification, and penance; at last —

"Beside the burgh of Jerusalem
He set him by a well-stream,
Sore wepand for his sin;
And as he sat, about midnight,
There came an angel fair and bright,
And brought him bread and wine:
He said, Palmer, wel thou be;
The King of Heaven greeteth wel thee;
Forgiven is sin thine!"

He wanders away, and at length arrives at a fair castle, belonging to a rich Queen; he begs for and receives food

and lodging. The Queen, after a conversation with him, resolves to entertain the pious palmer in the castle. After a sojourn here of many months, Sir Isumbras finds one day in an eagle's nest his own red mantle with the Soudan's gold in it. He bears it to his chamber, and the recollections it awakens completely overpower him. He becomes so altered that the Queen, in order to ascertain the cause, has his room broken open, when the sight of the gold explains all, and mutual recognition ensues. Sir Isumbras tells his Saracen subjects that they must be forthwith converted. They, however, object to such summary measures, and rise in rebellion against him and his Queen, who stand absolutely alone in the struggle. In the thick of the very unequal contest which ensues, three knights, mounted respectively on a lion, a leopard, and a unicorn, come in opportunely to the rescue, and by their aid Sir Isumbras gains a complete victory. These of course are his three lost sons. For each he obtains a kingdom; and, all uniting their efforts, they live to see the inhabitants of all their kingdoms converted: —

> "They lived and died in good intent,
> Unto heaven their souls went,
> When that they dead were;
> Jesu Christ, Heaven's King,
> Give us aye his blessing,
> And shield us from harm!"

Such, or similar to this, is the usual form of conclusion of all the old romances, even those — as the *Seven Sages*, for instance — of which the moral tone is extremely questionable.

A portion of the great romance of *Arthur* has been given to us in a modern dress by Tennyson. Few readers of poetry are unacquainted with his beautiful poem of *Morte d'Arthur*, a modern rendering of the concluding part of the romance bearing that title. The *Idyls of the*

King are renderings of so many particular passages or episodes in the same great romance.

2. *Tales* form the second class of narrative poems. The tale is a poem in which — as a general rule — the agencies are natural; in which the chief interest lies in the story itself, and the manner in which it is unfolded, not in the style, or language, or peculiar humour of the author; lastly, in which neither is the action on a large scale, nor are the chief actors great personages. The earliest, and still by far the best, collection of such tales, which English literature possesses, is the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer. In connection with this work we shall endeavour to draw out in some detail the proofs which it affords of the solidity and originality of Chaucer's genius.

In every great writer there is a purely personal element, and there is also a social element; — by the first, which is also the highest in kind, he is what he is, and soars freely in the empyrean of creative imagination; by the second, he is connected with and modified by the society in which he moves, the writers whom he follows or admires, and even the physical characters of the spot of earth where he resides. It is chiefly under these latter relations that we propose to consider the genius of Chaucer.

The English society in which he moved was already far beyond those comparatively simple relations which we ascribe to the society of feudal times. In the eyes of an old romance writer, mankind fall naturally and conveniently under these four divisions, — sovereign princes, knights, churchmen, and the commonalty. For this fourth, or proletarian class, he entertains a supreme contempt; he regards them as only fit to hew wood and draw water for princes and knights; and nothing delights him more than to paint the ignominious rout and promiscuous slaughter of thousands of this base-born multitude by the hand of a single favourite knight.

There certainly was a time, — before great cities rose to wealth and obtained franchises, — when feudal castles were scattered like hail over the north of Europe, and private war was universal and incessant, — at which this picture of society had much truth in it. And, as usually happens, the literature which had sprung up under, and which was adapted only to such a state of things, continued to be produced from the force of habit, after the face of society had become greatly altered. Shutting their eyes to the progress of things around them, — overlooking, or else bewailing as an innovation and a degeneracy, the constant accumulation and growing power of wealth obtained by industry, and the consequent rise of new classes of men into social importance, the romance-writers, as a body, continued rather to adapt their translations or original effusions to the atmosphere of the baronial hall, and to the established order of ideas in the knightly understanding, than to seek for sympathy among classes which they dreaded while affecting to despise.

But it is characteristic of genius, first, to have a profound insight into the real; then, boldly to face it; lastly, by the art which is its inseparable companion, to reproduce it under appropriate forms. Thus it was with Chaucer in the England of the fourteenth century. He had no literary models to work by, — in his own language at least,—except the antiquated and unreal feudal portraits above referred to; but he had sympathies as large as the nature of man, a soul that could not endure a dead form or a mere conventionality, and an intellect which arranged the human beings around him according to their intrinsic qualities, — by what they were rather than by what they were called. He felt, as Burns did, that

> "The rank is but the guinea stamp,
> The man 's the man for a' that."

And, accordingly, in that wonderful gallery of portraits,

the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, we have the existing aspects and classes of English society described with a broad and impartial hand. The Knight is indeed there, — one figure among many; nor does Chaucer, like Cervantes, present him in a ridiculous light; for knighthood in the fourteenth century was still a reality, not a piece of decayed pageantry, as in the sixteenth; — but he and his order appear as what they actually were, — that is, as one element in society amongst many; they do not, as in the pages of romance, cast all other orders of laymen into the shade. Churchmen again are, on the whole, represented without partiality and without bitterness; there may be a tinge of Puritanism in the keenness of some of the invectives against ecclesiastical personages, but it is not more than a tinge; on the whole, Chaucer may be truly said to

> "Nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice"—

and if we have an affected Prioress, a roguish Friar, and a hypocritical Pardoner, we have on the other side the Clerk of Oxenford, with his solid worth and learning, and the well-known character of the good parish priest. But besides the knight, the squire, and the ecclesiastical persons, a crowd of other characters come upon the canvas, and take part in the action. There is the Frankelein, the representative of the sturdy, hospitable, somewhat indolent, English freeholder, whom, however, participation in the political and judicial system introduced by the energetic Norman has made a better and more sterling person than were his lazy Saxon ancestors. Then we have the mixed population of cities represented by the Merchant, the Man of Law, the Shipman, the Doctour of Physike, and the good Wife of Bath, — all from the middle classes; — and by the Haberdasher, the Carpenter, the Webbe (weaver), &c., from the lower. The

inferior ranks of the rural population are represented by the Plowman, the Miller, and the Reve.

Viewed in this light, as a picture of contemporary society, the Prologue is certainly the most valuable part of the Canterbury Tales. And what does this picture show us? Not that distorted image, which the feudal pride of the great lords, humoured by the sycophancy of the minstrels, had conjured up in the romances, but the real living face of English society, such as Christianity and the mediæval church, working now for seven centuries upon the various materials submitted to their influence, had gradually fashioned it to be. Doubtless it shows many evils, — the profanation of sacred callings, — the abuse of things originally excellent, — ill-repressed tendencies to sloth, luxury, and licentiousness. But it shows also a state of things, in which every member of society, even the humblest, had recognised rights, and was not sunk beneath the dignity of man: we have the high and the low, the rich and the poor, but the high are not inordinately high, and the low are not debased. The cement of religion binds together the whole social fabric, causing the common sympathies of its members to predominate above the grounds of estrangement.

It might have been expected that not only the Prologue, but many of the tales which are put in the mouths of the characters there described, would be strongly illustrative of English life; but this is not the case. Chaucer, like Shakspeare, borrowed most of his stories from the various collections which he found ready to his hand; and these were not of English growth, nor was their scene laid in England. When he attempts, in imitation of Boccaccio, to invent humorous tales of his own (*e. g.* the *Miller's Tale*, the *Reeve's Tale*, &c.) he falls far short of his prototype. Like Boccaccio he is exceedingly coarse, but the coarseness is not relieved by that keen wit and exquisite beauty of style, which, with all that there is to condemn, we cannot

help admiring in the Italian writer. Several of Chaucer's original tales are both coarse and stupid. In the *Sompnour's Tale*, it must be confessed, the *dénouement* of the story is exceedingly humorous, but the joke is too broad for modern taste. The *Nonnes Prestes Tale* is also very diverting.

Among the writers to whom Chaucer was indebted, whether for ideas or materials, there were none to whom his obligations were so considerable as to the great Italians of the fourteenth century. The *Knight's Tale* is taken from Boccaccio, the *Clerke's Tale* from Petrarch, and the story of Hugilin or Ugolino in the *Monk's Tale* is borrowed from the well-known passage in Dante. But of Chaucer it can be truly said, "nihil quod tetigit, non ornavit." The exquisite grace and tenderness with which the story of "Patient Grizzel" is related, are all his own; and the fresh breezy air of the greenwood which we seem to inhale in reading parts of the *Knight's Tale*, betokens a Teutonic, not an Italian, imagination.

Lastly, let us endeavour to trace the influence of external nature upon Chaucer's poetical development. It must be borne in mind, — indeed, Chaucer's phraseology constantly brings the fact before us, — that to the English poet of the fourteenth century nature was far from being the pruned, tamed, and civilized phenomenon that she was and is to the poets of this and the eighteenth century. Chaucer speaks naturally, not figuratively, of the *greenwood*, by which he means what is now called in the Australian colonies "the bush," — that is, the wild woodland country, from which the original forests have never yet been removed by the hand of man. Even in Shakspeare's time, large portions of England still fell under this category; so that he, too, could naturally sing of the "greenwood tree," and found no difficulty in describing, in *As You Like It*, what an Australian would call *bush life*, — that is, life on a free earth and under a free heaven, — not travelling by turnpike roads, nor

haunted by the dread of trespass and its penalties, but permitting men to rove at large, and, in Shakspeare's phrase, "to fleet the time carelessly as in the golden world." This condition of external nature gives a largeness and freshness to the poetry which arises under it; the scent of the woods and the song of the birds seem to hang about the verse, and "sanctify the numbers."

But, again, observe the eminent healthiness, the well-balanced stability, of Chaucer's mind. He is no sickly naturalist; he does not turn with disgust from town life to "babble o'green fields;" he neither feels nor affects such a scorn or disapprobation of man and society as to be driven to take refuge in the untarnished loveliness of Nature, in order to find fit materials for poetical creations. Human society, no less than external nature, is in the eyes of Chaucer beautiful and venerable; it, too, comes from the hand of God; it, too, supplies fit themes for poetry.

With Shakspeare and Spenser, but preeminently with the former, the case is much the same. In Shakspeare there is none of that morbid revulsion against the crimes or littlenesses of society, which drove Byron and Shelley into alienation and open revolt against it; nor, again, is there that estrangement from active life and popular movement, which makes Wordsworth the poet of the fields and mountains, not of man. In the pages of the great dramatist, who truly "holds the mirror up to nature," not external only but human, we behold society in all its varied aspects, by turns repellent and attractive, yet in the main as establishing noble and dignified relations between man and man.

The following extracts are taken, — one from the *Clerke's*, the other from the *Nonnes Prestes Tale.* The much-enduring Grisildes is thus described: —

1.

"Among this pore folk there dwelt a man
Which that was holden porest of hem alle;

But heighe God som tyme sende can
His grace unto a litel oxe stalle.
Janicula men of that thorp him calle.
A doughter had he, fair y-nough to sight,
And Grisildes this yonge mayden hight.

"But though this mayden tender were of age,
Yet in the breste of her virginite
Ther was enclosed ripe and sad corrage;
And in gret reverence and charite
Hir olde pore fader fostered sche;
A few scheep, spynnyng, on the feld sche kept,
Sche nolde not ben ydel til sche slept.

"And whanne sche com hom sche wolde brynge
Wortis and other herbis tymes ofte,
The which sche shred and seth * for her lyvyng,
And made hir bed ful hard, and nothing softe.
And ay sche kept hir fadres lif on lofte†,
With every obeissance and diligence,
That child may do to fadres reverence."

The confusion in the poor widow's household, after the fox has carried off her cock, Chaunticleere, is thus humorously described: —

2.

"The sely wydow, and hir doughtres two,
Herden these hennys crie and maken wo,
And out at dores starte thay anon,
And saw the fox toward the wood is gone,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
They criden, 'Out! harrow and wayleway!
Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him thay ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Garlond,
And Malkin with a distaff in hir hond;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the veray hogges,
So were they fered for berkyng of the dogges,
And schowting of the men and wymmen eke,
Thay ronne that thay thought hir herte breke,
Thay yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes criden as men wold hem ‡quelle;

---

* Boiled.

† Kept on lofte, *i. e.* sustained, up-*lift*-ed; from the Anglo-Saxon *lyft*, air.

‡ Kill.

The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyve came the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a *benedicite!*
Certes he Jakke Straw, and his meynie*,
Ne maden schoutes never half so schrille,
Whan that thay wolden eny Flemyng kille
As thilke day was maad upon the fox."

To whatever period of our literature we may turn, a multitude of Tales present themselves for review. Gower's *Confessio Amantis* is in great part composed of them, the materials being taken from the Gesta Romanorum, or from collections of French Fabliaux. Dryden's so-called "Fables" are merely translations or modernizations of tales by Ovid, Chaucer, and Boccaccio. The *Knight's Tale*, or *Palamon and Arcite*, and the *Nun's Priest's Tale*, are those which he selected from Chaucer. Falconer's *Shipwreck*, a popular poem in its day, is hardly worth quoting from. The smooth and sounding verse betrays the careful student of Pope, but there is no force of imagination, no depth or lucidity of intellect. Prior's *Henry and Emma* is a re-cast, in heroic metre, of the beautiful ballad of the *Nut-Brown Maid*. The composition and versification, though sometimes vigorous, are not on the whole more than mediocre. An oft-quoted line occurs in it —

"That air and harmony of shape express,
Fine by degrees and beautifully less."

Crabbe's Tales show great narrative and dramatic skill, and contain some pathetic passages. Perhaps in all of them the moral is pointed with too much pains; the amiable writer had never felt that the true worth of poetry transcends any set didactic purpose:

"O! to what uses shall we put
The wild wood-flower that simply blows;
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?"†

* Band or retinue.

† Tennyson's *Fairy Princess.*

Parnell's *Hermit*, a didactic tale, contains the famous blunder — real or apparent — which Boswell solemnly submitted for Johnson's critical opinion. It occurs in the following lines: —

> "To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,
> To find if books *and* swains report it right;
> For yet *by swains alone* the world he knew,
> Whose feet came wandering o'er the nightly dew."

3. *Allegories.*—According to the etymology of the word, allegory means the expressing of one thing by means of another. And this may serve as a loose general definition of all allegorical writing; for it will embrace, not only the personification of human qualities, which is the ordinary subject of allegory, but also the application of any material designation to a subject to which it is properly inapplicable, as when Langlande speaks of the castle of Caro, and Bunyan of the city of Destruction, and the town of Apostasy. But in addition to the general notion of medial representation above stated, the word allegory involves also by usage the idea of a *narrative.* It embraces two kinds: 1, allegories proper; and 2, fables. The proper allegory has usually a didactic, but sometimes a satirical, purpose; sometimes, again, it blends satire with instruction. The author of the famous allegorical satire of *Reynard the Fox,* thus describes at the conclusion (we quote from Goethe's version) the didactic intention of his satire: — "Let every one quickly turn himself to wisdom, shun vice, and honour virtue. This is the sense of the poem; in which the poet has mingled fable and truth, that you may be able to discern good from evil, and to value wisdom, — that also the buyers of this book may from the course of the world receive daily instruction. For so are things constituted; so will they continue; and thus ends our poem of Reynard's nature and actions. May the Lord help us to eternal glory! Amen."

In Langlande's allegorical *Vision of Piers Plowman,* the satirical purpose so preponderates, that we have thought it best to class the work under the head of Satire. The great majority of the allegorical poems of our early writers have didactic aims more or less definite. Chaucer's beautiful allegory of the *Flower and the Leaf* has the following symbolical meaning, as Speght in his argument expresses it:—"They which honour the Flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure; but they that honour the Leaf, which abideth with the root notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow virtue and enduring qualities, without regard of worldly respects." The following extract is from the concluding portion of the poem:—

"'Now, faire Madame,' quoth I,
'If I durst aske, what is the cause and why,
That knightes have the ensigne of honour,
Rather by the leafe than the floure?'

"'Soothly, doughter,' quod she, 'this is the trouth:—
For knightes ever should be persevering,
To seeke honour without feintise or slouth,
Fro wele to better in all manner thinge;
In signe of which, with leaves aye lastinge
They be rewarded after their degre,
Whose lusty green may not appaired be,

"'But aye keping their beautè fresh and greene;
For there nis storme that may hem deface,
Haile nor snow, winde nor frostes kene;
Wherfore they have this property and grace.
And for the floure, within a little space
Wol they be lost, so simple of nature
They be, that they no grievance may endure.'"

The allegorical works of Lydgate and Hawes have not sufficient merit to require special notice. Some account of Dunbar's and Lyndsay's allegories was given in our

notice of those poets.* We pass on to the great allegorical masterpiece of the Elizabethan period,— Spenser's *Faery Queen.* In this poem the Gothic or Romantic spirit is even yet more decisively in the ascendant than in the plays of Shakspeare, although under the correction of the finer feeling for art, which the Renaissance had awakened. Its great length causes it to be little read at the present day; and yet a true lover of poetry, when once he has taken the book up, will find it difficult to lay it down. The richness of the imagery, the stately beauty of the style, — above all, that nameless and indescribable charm, which a work of true genius always bears about it,— makes one forget the undeniable prolixity with which the design of the poem is worked out. It is dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, and in a letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, which is generally prefixed to the work, the author has explained his plan :—

"The general end of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline; which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historical fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter than for profite of the ensample, I chose the Historye of King Arthure, as most fit for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many men's former workes, and also farthest from the danger of envy, and suspicion of present time. In which I have followed all the antique poets historicall; . . . . by ensample of [whom] I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private Morall Vertues, as Aristotle hath devised: the which is the purpose of these first twelve bookes."

After saying that he conceives Arthur to have "seen in a dreame or vision the Faerie Queen, with whose excellent beautie ravished, he, awaking, resolved to seeke her out," he proceeds :—

"In that Faerie Queene I mean Glory in my general intention,

* See p. 69.

but in my particular, I mean the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdom in Faerie Land. And yet, in some places els, I do otherwise shadow her;" namely, as the huntress Belphœbe. "So, in the person of Prince Arthure I set forth Magnificence in particular; which Vertue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and containeth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deeds of Arthure applyable to that Vertue, which I write of in that booke. But of the twelve other Vertues, I make twelve other knights the patrones for the more variety of the history."

Some idea of the nature of the poem, and of the depth and richness of Spenser's imagination, may be gained from the following brief analysis of the twelfth canto of the second book, which contains the *Legend of Sir Guyon, or of Temperance.*

Sir Guyon, under the guidance of a Palmer, is voyaging towards the Bower of Blisse, the abode of Acrasia (Intemperance). The boat has to pass between the Gulf of Greedinesse and a Magnetic mountain. Escaped from these dangers, they coast by the Wandering Islands; then they run the gauntlet between a quicksand and a whirlpool. A "hideous host" of sea-monsters vainly endeavour to terrify them. Then they sail near the Bay of the Mermaids, who sing more enchantingly than the Sirens; but Guyon turns a deaf ear. At last they reach the desired land, and proceed to the Bower of Blisse. Rejecting the cup of wine tendered by the Dame Excesse, Guyon presses forward through the garden:—

"Eft soones they heard a most melodious sound,
Of all that might delight a dainty eare,
Such as attonce might not on living ground,
Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere:
Right hard it was for wight that did it heare,
To read what manner musicke that mote bee;
For all that pleasing is to living eare
Was there consorted in one harmonie;
Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree.

"The joyous birdes, shrouded in chearefull shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempred sweet;
Th' angelicall soft trembling voices made
To th' instruments divine respondence meet;
The silver-sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmure of the waters' fall;
The waters' fall, with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all."

Then from the lips of an unseen singer there issues an enthralling Epicurean strain:—

"The whiles some one did chaunt this lovely lay:
'Ah! see, whoso fayre thing dost faine to see,
In springing flowre the image of thy day!
Ah! see the virgin rose, how sweetly she
Doth first peepe forth with bashful modestee,
That fairer seemes the lesse ye see her may!
Lo! see, soon after how more bold and free
Her bared bosome she doth broad display;
Lo! see soon after how she fades and falls away!

"'So passeth, in the passing of a day
Of mortall life, the leafe, the bud, the flowre;
* * * * * *
Gather therefore the rose whilst yet is prime,
For soon comes age that will her pride deflowre;
Gather the rose of love whilst yet is time,
Whilst loving thou mayst loved be with equall crime.'"

But Guyon holds on his way unswervingly, and at last comes upon Acrasia, whom he seizes and binds, together with her lover, a foolish dissipated youth, with the strangely modern name of *Verdant*. Then the knight breaks down all those pleasant bowers "with vigour pittilesse," and the Palmer turns back into their natural shape a crowd of persons, whom Acrasia had, Circe-like, transformed into animals. So ends the canto.

The metre of the *Faery Queen* was formed by Spenser from the Italian *ottava rima*, or eight-line stanza (said to have been invented by Boccaccio), by the addition of a

ninth line, two syllables longer than the rest. This, however, is not the only distinction, for the internal organisation of the two stanzas is widely different. That of Spenser closely resembles in this respect the Chaucerian heptastich, the essential character of both being fixed by the rhyming of the fifth line to the fourth. Strike out from the Spenserian stanza the sixth and seventh lines, rhyming respectively to the eighth and fifth, and cut off the two extra syllables in the last line, and you have at once the Chaucerian heptastich. It cannot be denied that the Spenserian is a more subtly-constructed stanza than the *ottava rima*; yet, from its length, it tends to become unwieldy, and therefore requires to be managed with the utmost skill. The use of it with Spenser seems to have become a sort of second nature; when employed by others, even by so considerable a poet as Byron, it does not escape from being occasionally wearisome.

Thomson, in his *Castle of Indolence*, succeeded remarkably well in imitating the roll of the Spenserian stanza. The first canto, which, as Dr. Johnson observes, "opens a scene of lazy luxury that fills the imagination," dilates with evident gusto on the pleasures of a life of indolence. Thomson himself is described in the following stanza, said to have been written by Lord Lyttleton:

> "A bard here dwelt, more fat than bard beseems,
> Who void of envy, guile, and lust of gain,
> On virtue still, and virtue's pleasing themes,
> Pour'd forth his unpremeditated strain:
> The world forsaking with a calm disdain,
> Here laugh'd he careless in his easy seat;
> Here quaff'd, encircled with the joyous train,
> Oft moralizing sage: his ditty sweet
> He loathèd much to write, ne carèd to repeat."

In the second canto the haunt of "lazy luxury" is broken in upon by the "Knight of Arts and Industry," who destroys the castle, and puts to flight its inmates.

The other form of allegorical composition is the *fable*, or *apologue*, in which, under the guise of things said or done by the inferior animals, tendencies in human nature are illustrated, maxims of practical wisdom enforced, and the besetting vices and inconsistencies of man exposed. Fables are short, because they are severally confined to the illustration of a single maxim or tendency, and would inculcate their moral less strikingly, were the story enveloped in many words. In this kind of composition, the only considerable metrical work in our literature is Gay's Fables. The idea of versifying Æsop was taken by Gay from Lafontaine, but executed with far inferior power and grace. The following is a fair sample of the collection :—

THE TURKEY AND THE ANT.

"In other men we faults can spy
And blame the mote that dims their eye,
Each little speck and blemish find;
To our own stronger errors blind.
A Turkey, tir'd of common food,
Forsook the barn, and sought the wood;
Behind her ran an infant train,
Collecting here and there a grain.
'Draw near, my birds!' the mother cries,
'This hill delicious fare supplies;
Behold the busy negro race,
See millions blacken all the place!
Fear not; like me, with freedom eat;
An ant is most delightful meat.
How bless'd, how envy'd, were our life,
Could we but 'scape the poulterer's knife!
But man, curs'd man, on turkeys preys,
And Christmas shortens all our days.
Sometimes with oysters we combine,
Sometimes assist the savoury chine;
From the low peasant to the lord,
The turkey smokes on every board;
Sure men for gluttony are curs'd,
Of the seven deadly sins the worst.'
An Ant, who climb'd beyond her reach,
Thus answer'd from the neighbouring beech:

'Ere you remark another's sin,
Bid your own conscience look within:
Control thy more voracious bill,
Nor for a breakfast nations kill.'"

A variety of other fables and apologues in verse lie scattered over the literary field, some of which are sufficiently spirited and entertaining. Among the best of these are Mrs. Thrale's *Three Warnings*, and Merrick's *Chameleon*.

4. By *romantic poems*, the name assigned to the fourth subdivision of narrative poetry, we mean, poems in which heroic subjects are epically treated, after the manner of the old romances of chivalry, yet in which neither the subject nor the form rise to the true dignity of the Epic. Such poems are essentially the fruit of modern times and modern ideas. Between the period of the Renaissance, when the production of metrical romances ceased, and the close of the eighteenth century, the taste of European society preferred, both in art and literature, works modelled upon the masterpieces of Greek and Roman genius, and recoiled with an aversion, more or less sincere, from all that was Gothic or mediæval. In such a period, a romantic poem, had it appeared, would have been crushed by the general ridicule, or smothered under the general neglect. But, towards the close of the eighteenth century, a reaction set in, and the romantic poems of Scott and his imitators are one among many of its fruits.

The *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, the earliest of these productions (1805), exhibits the influence of the old romances much more decidedly than those of later date. Expressions and half lines constantly occur in it, which are transferred unaltered from the older compositions; and the vivid and minute description of Branksome Hall, with which the poem opens, is exactly in the style of the graphic old Trouvères: —

"Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.
* * * * *
Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow;
A hundred more fed free in stall;—
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall."

The popularity of the *Lay* naturally induced Scott to go on working in the same mine; *Marmion* came out in 1808, and the *Lady of the Lake* in 1810. *Marmion*, though it has fine passages, is faulty as a poem. The introductions to the cantos, addressed to six of his friends, are so long, and touch upon such a variety of topics, that the impressions they create interfere with those which the story itself is intended to produce; nor have they much intrinsic merit, if we except that to William Rose, containing the famous memorial lines on Pitt and Fox. In the *Lady of the Lake*, Scott's poetical style reaches its acme. Here the romantic tale culminates; the utmost that can be expected from a kind of poetry far below the highest, and from a metre essentially inferior to the heroic, is here attained The story is conducted with much art; the characters are interesting; the scenery glorious; the versification far less faulty than in *Marmion*.

Byron's Oriental Tales,— the *Giaour*, the *Corsair*, the *Bride of Abydos*, &c.,— are but imitations, with changed scenery and accessories, of Scott's romantic poems, though they displaced them for a time in the public favour. But the *Lady of the Lake* will probably outlive the *Corsair*,

because it appeals to wider and more permanent sympathies. The young, the vehement, the restless, delight in the latter, because it reflects and glorifies to their imagination the wild disorder of their own spirits; the aged and the calm find little in it to prize or to commend. But the former poem, besides that "hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active disposition," * has attractions also for the firm, even mind of manhood and the pensiveness of age: the truth and vividness of its painting, whether of manners or of nature, delight the one; the healthy buoyancy of tone, recalling the days of its youthful vigour, pleasantly interests the other.

The following extract is from the well-known Pirate's Song, with which the *Corsair* opens: —

"O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire, and behold our home.
These are our realms, no limits to their sway —
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
From toil to rest, and joy in every change.
Oh, who can tell? not thou, luxurious slave!
Whose soul would sicken o'er the heaving wave!
Not thou, vain lord of wantonness and ease!
Whom slumber soothes not — pleasure cannot please.—
Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
The exulting sense — the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way;
That for itself can woo the approaching fight,
And turn what some deem danger to delight;
That seeks what cravens shun with more than zeal,
And where the feebler faint — can only feel: —
Feel — to the rising bosom's inmost core,
Its hope awaken and its spirit soar!"

Moore's *Lalla Rookh* is also a romantic poem, more

* *Life of Scott*: *Diary.*

musical and more equably sustained than those of Byron, but inferior to his in force, and to Scott's both in force and nobleness. One passage we will give; — it is that in which the Peri, whose admission to Paradise depends upon her finding a gift for the Deity which will be meet for his acceptance, and who has already vainly offered the heart's blood of a hero fallen in his country's defence, and the last sigh of a maiden who had sacrificed her life for her lover, — finds, at last, the acceptable gift in the tear of penitence, shed by one who had seemed hardened in crime:

"But, hark! the vesper-call to prayer,
As slow the orb of daylight sets,
Is rising sweetly on the air
From Syria's thousand minarets!
The boy has started from the bed
Of flowers, where he had laid his head,
And down upon the fragrant sod
Kneels, with his forehead to the South,
Lisping the eternal name of God
From purity's own cherub mouth,
And looking, while his hands and eyes
Are lifted to the glowing skies,
Like a stray babe of Paradise,
Just lighted on that flowery plain,
And seeking for its home again!
Oh, 't was a sight — that Heaven — that child —
A scene which might have well beguiled
Ev'n haughty Eblis of a sigh
For glories lost and peace gone by.

"And how felt *he*, the wretched man
Reclining there — while memory ran
O'er many a year of guilt and strife,
Flew o'er the dark field of his life,
Nor found one sunny resting-place,
Nor brought him back one branch of grace!
'There *was* a time,' he said, in mild
Heart-humbled tones,—'thou blessed child!
When, young and haply pure as thou,
I looked and prayed like thee,—but now——'
He hung his head,—each nobler aim
And hope and feeling, which had slept
From boyhood's hour, that instant came
Fresh o'er him, and he wept — he wept!'

5. The historical poem is a metrical narrative of public events, extending over a period more or less prolonged of a nation's history. It lies open to the obvious objection that, if the intention be merely to communicate facts, they can be more easily and clearly described in prose; if to write something poetically beautiful, the want of unity of plan, and the restraints which the historical style imposes on the imagination, must be fatal to success. Hence the rhyming chronicles of *Layamon*, *Robert of Gloucester*, and *Robert Manning*, though interesting to the *historian* of our literature, are of no value to the critic. In Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* the defects of this style are less apparent, because the narrative is confined to the events of one year, and that year (1666) was rendered memorable by two great calamities, neither of which was unsusceptible of poetic treatment — the great Plague and the Fire of London. Yet, after all, the *Annus Mirabilis* is a dull poem; few readers would now venture upon the interminable series of its lumbering stanzas.

Didactic Poetry: The "Hind and Panther;" Essay on Man; Essay on Criticism; "Vanity of Human Wishes."

We have now arrived at the didactic class of poems, those, namely, in which it is the express object of the writer to inculcate some moral lesson, some religious tenet, or some philosophical opinion. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, and many other well-known poems, answer to this description.

All, or very nearly all, the Anglo-Saxon poetry composed subsequently to the introduction of Christianity, bears a didactic character. Of Cædmon the Venerable Bede remarks, that he "never composed an idle verse;" that is to say, his poetical aims were always didactic. A large proportion also of the English poetry produced in the three centuries following the conquest had direct instruc-

tion in view. Most of Chaucer's allegories point to some kind of moral; but the father of our poetry seems to have thought that when a writer desired to be purely and simply didactic, he should employ prose; for the only two of the *Canterbury Tales* which answer to that description — the *Parson's Tale on Penance*, and the *Tale of Melibœus* enforcing the duty of the forgiveness of injuries — are in prose. Shakspeare never wrote a didactic poem; though there is no limit to the suggestiveness and thought-enkindling power of his pregnant lines. The same may be said of Milton; yet, as might be expected from the extreme earnestness of the man, a subordinate didactic purpose is often traceable, not only in the *Paradise Lost*, but in the *Comus*, the *Lycidas*, and even the *Sonnets*. The earliest regular didactic poem in the language is the *Hind and Panther* of Dryden, who, it will be remembered, was always a good and ready prose writer, who developed his poetical talent late, and who, but for his marvellous genius for rhyme, which grew constantly with his years, would have preferred, one might fancy, prose to verse for a religious polemic, as he had preferred it twenty years before for an essay on the Drama. However, we must be thankful that by indulging his genius in this instance, he has left us a very extraordinary specimen of metrical dialectics.

The *Hind and Panther* cannot properly be called an allegory, for over the greater portion of it there is no second meaning in reserve; the obvious sense is the only one. The interlocutors and mute personages are allegorical, and that is all. Instead of Bossuet and Burnet, we have the Hind and the Panther; but the expressions which are put in the mouths of the animals are, for the most part, precisely those which might have been put in the mouths of the divines. In the two following extracts the rival disputants are introduced to the reader: —

> "A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged;

Without unspotted, innocent within,
She feared no danger, for she knew no sin:
Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds,
And Scythian shafts; was often forced to fly,
And doomed to death, though fated not to die."

The Independents, Quakers, Baptists, &c., are next enumerated, under the *soubriquets* of the Bear, the Hare, the Boar, &c. The Lion, whose business, as king of beasts, is to keep order in the forest, is, of course, James II. The Panther is then introduced: —

"The Panther, sure the noblest next the Hind,
And fairest creature of the spotted kind;
Oh, could her inborn stains be washed away,
She were too good to be a beast of prey!
How can I praise or blame, and not offend,
Or how divide the frailty from the friend?
Her faults and virtues lie so mix'd, that she
Not wholly stands condemn'd nor wholly free.
Then, like her injur'd Lion, let me speak;
He cannot bend her, and he would not break.
* * * * * *
If, as our dreaming Platonists report,
There could be spirits of a middle sort,
Too black for heaven, and yet too white for hell,
Who just dropped half way down, nor lower fell;
So poised, so gently she descends from high,
It seems a soft dismission from the sky."

The first two books are taken up with doctrinal discussions. The third opens with a long desultory conversation, partly on politics, partly on pending or recent theological controversies (that between Dryden and Stillingfleet, for instance), partly on church parties and the sincerity of conversions. The language put in the mouth of the Hind often jars most absurdly with the gentle magnanimous nature assigned to her; and in her sallies and rejoinders the tone of the coarse unscrupulous party-writer appears without the least disguise. This conversation is ended by the Panther proposing to relate the tale of the Swallows.

By these birds the English Catholics are intended, who, following the foolish counsels of the Martin (Father Petro, James's trusted adviser) are expelled from their nests, and perish miserably. A conversation follows on the politics of the Church of England. Viewed in the light of subsequent events, the confidence expressed by the Hind in the Panther's immovable adherence to her non-resistance principles excites a smile. The Hind next volunteers the story of the Pigeons, by whom are meant the Anglican clergy. Their ringleader, the Buzzard, is a satirical sketch of Burnet, an important actor in the intrigues which brought on the Revolution. By following the Buzzard's counsel, the Pigeons draw down upon themselves the righteous wrath of the farmer (James II.). The poem then ends abruptly.

The most remarkable didactic poem in the language is Pope's *Essay on Man*, written in 1732. Mandeville and others had recently impugned the benevolence and sanctity of the Deity by pointing out a variety of evils and imperfections in the system of things, and asserting that these were necessary to the welfare and stability of human society. This is the whole argument of the *Fable of the Bees*. Pope in this Essay undertakes to "vindicate the ways of God to man." And how does he do so? *Not* — with regard to physical evil — by admitting, indeed, with the Apostle, that the "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together," but connecting its imperfect condition with the original sin and fall of moral agents; *not* — with regard to moral evil — by tracing it to man's abuse of his free will, permitted but not designed by his Creator, and to the ceaseless activity of evil spirits; *but*, by representing evil, moral as well as physical, to be a part of God's providential scheme for the government of the universe, to be in fact not absolutely and essentially evil, but only relatively and incidentally so: —

"All partial evil, universal good."

All this was pointed out, shortly after the appearance of the Essay, in a criticism from the pen of Crousaz, a Swiss professor. Warburton, in the commentary which he attached to a new edition of the poem in 1740, replied to the strictures of Crousaz, and with much pains and ingenuity endeavoured to give an innocent meaning to all the apparently questionable passages. Ruffhead, in his Life of Pope, gives it as his opinion that Warburton completely succeeded. Johnson was more clear-sighted. In his Life of Pope, after saying that Bolingbroke supplied the poet with the principles of the Essay, he adds, "These principles it is not my business to clear from obscurity, dogmatism, or falsehood." And again—"The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he seems not to have understood, and was pleased with an interpretation which made them orthodox." But what sense but one is it possible to attach to such passages as the following?—

> "If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
> Why, then, a Borgia or a Catiline?
> Who knows, but He, whose hand the lightning forms,
> Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms,
> *Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind*,
> Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?
> From pride, from pride, our very reasoning springs;
> Account for moral as for natural things;
> Why charge we Heaven in those, in these acquit?
> In both, to reason right is to submit."

Evidently God is here made not the *permitter* only, but the *designer*, of moral evil. Again—

> "Submit—in this or any other sphere,
> Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear."

From this dictum, left unguarded as it is, it might be inferred that virtue, and the acting in obedience to conscience or against it, had nothing to do with man's blessedness. Again—

> "Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
> A hero perish, or a sparrow fall."

Yet we are told, "You are of more value than many sparrows." Phenomena in the moral world are here confounded with phenomena in the natural. With God there is neither small nor great in a material sense; so far these lines convey a just lesson. But how can anything which affects the welfare of one human soul — be it that of a "hero" or of a pauper — be measured by a standard of material greatness?

Alive to the weak points in the morality of the Essay, Pope wrote the *Universal Prayer*, as a kind of compendious exposition of the meaning which he desired to be attached to it. In this he says that the Creator,

> "— binding Nature fast in fate,
> Left free the human will."

How this can be reconciled with the suggestion to —

> "Account for moral as for natural things,"

Warburton never attempted to explain.

Mr. Carruthers, in his Life of Pope, speaks of this controversy as if it could have no interest for people of the present generation, who read the Essay for the sake of its brilliant rhetoric and exquisite descriptions, and do not trouble themselves about the reasoning. But whether they are conscious of it or not, the moral tone of the poem does influence men's minds, as the use which is constantly made of certain well-known lines sufficiently demonstrates.* It was necessary, therefore, to commence our notice of the poem with this brief criticism of its general drift. We now proceed to quote one or two passages from this wonderful production, which is stamped throughout with an intellectual force which was perhaps never exceeded among the sons of men.†

* For instance —

> "In faith and hope mankind may disagree,
> But all the world's concern is charity."

† The student is recommended to read the whole Essay carefully.

"Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topp'd hill, an humbler heaven;
Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire —
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company."

The optimism, which is the philosophical key-note of the Essay — which Leibnitz had rendered fashionable by his *Theodicœa*, and Voltaire was to turn into ridicule in his *Candide* — is thus summed up at the end of the first part: —

"Submit — in this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear.
Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
Or in the natal or the mortal hour.
All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear — Whatever is, is right."

The following analysis of Fame is from the fourth part: —

"What's fame? — A fancied life in others' breath,
A thing beyond us, e'en before our death;
Just what you hear, you have; and what's unknown,
The same (my lord) if Tully's or your own.
All that we feel of it begins and ends
In the small circle of our foes or friends;
To all beside, as much an empty shade
As Eugene living, or a Cæsar dead;
Alike or when or where they shone or shine,
Or on the Rubicon or on the Rhine.

A wit 's a feather, and a chief a rod —
An honest man 's the noblest work of God.
* * * * *
All fame is foreign but of true desert,
Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart;
One self-approving hour whole years outweighs
Of stupid starers, and of loud huzzas;
And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels."

The *Essay on Criticism* must also be classed among didactic poems. In it Pope lays down rules, in emulation of Horace's famous Epistle *de Arte Poeticâ*, of Boileau's *Art de Poésie*, and Roscommon's *Essay on Translated Verse*, for the guidance, not of the writers, but of the critics, of poetry. The depth and sincerity of the admiration with which Pope looked up to the ancient masters of song, appear from many passages of this brilliant Essay, particularly from the peroration of the first part, which, though somewhat marred by the anti-climax at the end, is replete with a nervous strength — the poet's voice quivering, as it were, with suppressed emotion, yet not less clear or musical for the weakness — which it is easier to feel than to describe.

"Still green with bays each ancient altar stands,
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;
Secure from flames, from envy's fiercer rage,
Destructive war, and all-involving age.
See, from each clime the learn'd their incense bring!
Hear, in all tongues consenting pæans ring!
In praise so just let every voice be joined,
And fill the general chorus of mankind.
Hail, bards triumphant! born in happier days,
Immortal heirs of universal praise!
Whose honours with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
O may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last, the meanest, of your sons inspire

(That on weak wings from far pursues your flights,
Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes),
To teach vain wits a science little known,
To admire superior sense, and doubt their own."

Johnson's poem on the *Vanity of Human Wishes* is imitated from the tenth *Satire* of Juvenal. The striking passage on Hannibal (expende Hannibalem &c.) is transferred to Charles XII. of Sweden. The lines will bear quotation: —

"On what foundations stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes, let Swedish Charles decide;
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labours tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquer'd lord of pleasure and of pain;
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield,
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field;
Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign;
Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain;
'Think nothing gained,' he cries, 'till nought remain;'
'On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,'
'And all be mine beneath the Polar sky.'
The march begins in military state,
And nations on his eye suspended wait;
Stern Famine guards the solitary coast,
And Winter barricades the realms of Frost;
He comes, nor want nor cold his course delay;—
Hide, blushing Glory, hide Pultowa's day:
The vanquish'd hero leaves his broken bands,
And shows his miseries in distant lands;
Condemn'd a needy supplicant to wait,
While ladies interpose, and slaves debate.
But did not Chance at length her error mend?
Did no subverted empire mark his end?
Did rival monarchs give the fatal wound?
Or hostile millions press him to the ground?
His fall was destined to a barren strand,
A petty fortress, and a dubious hand;
He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

Satirical Poetry — Moral; Personal; Political.

The didactic poet assumes the office of an educator; the satirist that of a *censor morum*. The first has the same relation to the second which the schools of a country have to its courts of justice. One aims at forming virtue, and imparting wisdom; the other at scourging vice, and exposing folly. According to its proper theory, satire is the Lynch law of a civilised society; it reaches persons, and punishes acts, which the imperfections of legal justice would leave unchastised. But could not such persons and acts be more efficaciously influenced by warnings of a didactic nature? should they not be left to the philosopher and the divine? The satirist answers, no; there is a class of offenders so case-hardened in vanity and selfishness as to be proof against all serious admonition. To these the dictum applies —

> "——Ridiculum acri
> Fortius et melius magnas plerumque secat res."

The only way of shaming or deterring them is to turn the world's laugh against them—to analyse their conduct, and show it up before the public gaze as intrinsically odious and contemptible. He does not expect thereby to effect any moral improvement in *them*, but rather to shame and deter others who might be preparing to imitate them; just as a good system of police is favourable to morality, by diminishing the temptations and the returns to wrong-doing. The satirist therefore professes a moral purpose:—

> "Hear this and tremble, *you who 'scape the laws;*
> Yes, while I live, no rich or noble knave
> Shall walk the world in credit to his grave;
> To Virtue only and her friends a friend,
> The world beside may murmur or commend." *

* Pope's *Imitations of Horace.*

Satirical poetry is divisible into three classes — Moral, Personal, and Political. By the first is meant that general satire on contemporary morals and manners, of which Horace, Juvenal, and Pope furnish us with such admirable examples. Personal satires are those which are mainly directed against individuals, as Dryden's *M'Flecknoe,* and *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.* Political satires are written in the interest of a party in the State; the most famous instance is Dryden's *Absalom and Ahitophel.*

In purely personal satire, the chances are so small in favour of the chastisement being administered with pure impartiality and justice, that the world rightly attaches less value to it than to moral satire. The occasions when personal satire becomes really terrible, are those when, in the midst of a general moral satire on prevailing vices or follies, the acts and character of individuals are introduced by way of *illustrating* the maxims that have just been enunciated. The attack then has the appearance of being unpremeditated, as if it had been simply suggested by the line of reflection into which the poet had fallen; and its effect is proportionally greater. Pope well understood this principle, as we shall presently see.

In the Middle Ages, moral satire generally seized upon ecclesiastical abuses. The *Land of Cokayne* (assigned by Warton to the end of the eleventh century, but which must be at least a century later), is a satire on the indolence and gluttony into which the monastic life, when relaxed, has occasionally fallen. The *Vision of Piers Plowman* is in great part satirical, directing its attacks chiefly against the higher secular clergy.

The satires of Donne and Hall (the first of which received the honour of modernisation from Pope), are too rough and harsh to have much poetical value. For a specimen of Hall's powers in this way, we take the following picture of a chaplain in a country house, at the end of the sixteenth century:—

"A gentle squire would gladly entertaine
Into his house some trencher-chapelaine:
Some willing man that might instruct his sons,
And that would stand to good conditions.
First, that he lie upon the truckle-bed,
Whiles his young maister lieth o'er his head.
Secondly, that he do, on no default,
Ever presume to sit above the salt.
Third, that he never change his trencher twice;
Fourth, that he use all common courtesies;
Sit bare at meales, and one halfe rise and wait;
Last, that he never his young maister beat.
* * * * *
All these observed, he could contented be,
To give five markes and winter liverie."

Swift's satire, strong and crushing as it is, is so much the less effective, because it seems to spring, not from moral indignation, but from a misanthropical disgust at mankind. Pope excelled in satire, as in everything else that he attempted, and must be ranked with the few really great satirists of all time. Not that his indignant denunciations were not frequently prompted by personal pique and irritated vanity; but his fine taste usually enabled him to mask his personal feelings under the veil, more or less transparent, of a stern and stoical regard for virtue. His satirical writings in verse consist of the four *Moral Essays*, in the form of epistles, addressed to several persons; the epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, also called the *Prologue to the Satires*, the *Imitations of Horace* (six in the heroic couplet, and two in octo-syllabics, after the manner of Swift), the *Epilogue to the Satires*, and the *Dunciad*. Of the Moral Essays, the first, *Of the Knowledge and Characters of Men*, is, till just at the close, rather descriptive than satirical. In the second, *On the Characters of Women*, he dashes at once into satire. In contrast to those empty-headed, frivolous fair ones, whose "true no-meaning puzzles more than wit," he

draws the celebrated character of Sarah Duchess of Marlborough :—

"But what are these to great Atossa's mind,
Scarce once herself, by turns all woman kind;
Who, with herself, or others, from her birth
Finds all her life one warfare upon earth;
Shines in exposing knaves and painting fools,
Yet is whate'er she hates and ridicules.
No thought advances, but her eddy brain
Whisks it about, and down it goes again.
Full sixty years the world has been her trade,
The wisest fool much time has ever made.
* * * * *
Offend her, and she knows not to forgive;
Oblige her, and she 'll hate you while you live;
But die, and she 'll adore you — then the bust
And temple rise — then fall again to dust.
Last night her lord was all that 's good and great —
A knave this morning, and his will a cheat.
Strange! by the means defeated of the ends,
By spirit robb'd of power, by warmth of friends,
By wealth of followers! without one distress,
Sick of herself, through very selfishness!
Atossa, cursed with every granted prayer,
Childless with all her children, wants an heir.
To heirs unknown descends the unguarded store,
Or wanders, heaven-directed, to the poor."

In the third essay, on the *Use of Riches*, after the beautiful description of the *Man of Ross*, who, with "five hundred pounds a year," made his beneficent influence felt in all the country round, occurs, by way of contrast, the picture of the closing scene of Charles II.'s splendid favourite, the second Duke of Buckingham :—

"In the worst inn's worst room, with mat half hung,
The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung,
On once a flock-bed, but repaired with straw,
With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villiers lies — alas! how changed from him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim!
Gallant and gay, in Cliveden's proud alcove,
The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love;

Or just as gay at council, in a ring
Of mimic statesmen, and their merry king.
No wit to flatter left of all his store!
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more;
There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame, this lord of useless thousands ends!"

Pope perhaps took up this particular character from the ambition of rivalling Dryden, who, as we shall see presently, wrote a powerful piece of satire upon Buckingham, in his *Absalom and Ahitophel.* The fourth essay satirises the various kinds of bad taste, but contains no passages particularly suitable for citation.

In the epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot — one of the brightest, wittiest, and most forcible productions of the human intellect — after lashing the minor poets of the day, all whom —

"his modest satire bade translate,
And own'd that nine such poets made a Tate" —

the poet proceeds to strike at higher game:—

"Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires:
Bless'd with each talent, and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise —
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus * were he?"

* Addison.

It would be easy to multiply extracts from the imitations of Horace which follow; but we must leave the reader to study them for himself. Sketches of his own boyhood—concise but weighty criticisms on English poets—savage attacks on the objects of his hate — Lord Hervey, for instance—and noble descriptions, somewhat jarring therewith, of the ideal dignity and equity of satire — all this and more will be found in these wonderful productions. The two which are written in the manner of Swift show a marked inferiority to the rest.

In the *Dunciad* personal satire predominates, but there are passages of more general bearing in which Pope rises to the full height of his genius. Such a passage is the description of the approach of the empire of Dulness, at the end of the poem: —

"She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold," &c.

In personal satire, the main object is the exposure of an individual, or individuals. Skelton's satires on Wolsey are perhaps the earliest example in our literature. Dryden's *M'Flecknoe* is an attack on Shadwell, a rival dramatist and a Whig, and therefore doubly obnoxious to the Tory laureat. Churchill's satires, though much extolled by his contemporaries, have little interest for modern readers. Gifford's *Baviad and Mæviad* is a clever satire in two parts, in the manner of Pope, on the affected poets and poetesses of the Cruscan school, so called after Della Crusca, an Italian, the coryphæus of this namby-pamby tribe. The following extract will give an idea of its merits: —

"Lo, Della Crusca! In his closet pent,
He toils to give the crude conception vent;
Abortive thoughts, that right and wrong confound,
Truth sacrificed to letters, sense to sound,
False glare, incongruous images, combine,
And noise and nonsense clatter through the line.

'Tis done. Her house the generous Piozzi lends,
And thither summons her blue-stocking friends;
The summons her blue-stocking friends obey,
Lured by the love of poetry — and tea."

In the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Byron, with the reckless petulance of youth, held up to ridicule nearly all the poets of his day — Scott, Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Moore, &c. In later life, however, he made ample amends for several of these attacks, to which irritation against the Edinburgh Review, and the feeling of power, rather than any serious dislike of his brother poets, had impelled him. The point and spirit of the poem falls off after the first two hundred lines, and it becomes at last absolutely tedious. The following extracts will serve to illustrate the bold and dashing character of this satire. The first regards Southey: —

"Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,
Arabia's monstrous, wild, and wondrous son;
Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew
More mad magicians than the world e'er knew.
Immortal hero! all thy foes o'ercome,
For ever reign — the rival of Tom Thumb!
Since startled metre fled before thy face,
Well wert thou doomed the last of all thy race,
Well might triumphant Genii bear thee hence,
Illustrious conqueror of common sense!"

The next is on Wordsworth: —

"Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
That mild apostate from poetic rule,
The simple Wordsworth — framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favourite May.
Who warns his friend to 'shake off toil and trouble,'
And quit his books, for fear of growing double;'
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose;
Convincing all by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane,
And Christmas stories tortured into rhyme,
Contain the essence of the true sublime.

Thus, when he tells the Tale of Betty Foy,
The idiot mother of her 'idiot boy,'
A moon-struck silly lad who lost his way,
And like his bard, confounded night with day,
So close on each pathetic point he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the 'idiot in his glory,'
Conceive the bard the hero of the story."

Political satire castigates, nominally in the interest of virtue, but really in the interest of a party, the ambition and hypocrisy of the adherents of the opposite faction. The two most notable exemplifications in our literature are Butler's *Hudibras* and Dryden's *Absalom and Ahitophel*. The figures of Sir Hudibras and Ralpho — the one intended to represent the military Puritan, half hypocrite, half enthusiast —

"who built his faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun;"

the other meant to expose a lower type of Puritan character, in which calculating craft, assuming the mask of devotion without the reality, made its profit out of the enthusiasm of others — are satirical creations which, if not equal to Don Quixote and Sancho, can never lose their interest in the country which produced the originals. It is worth noting that *Hudibras* is not only a satire — it is also in some sense a burlesque upon romances in the manner of Cervantes, and even a partial parody on the *Faery Queen*, the headings of Spenser's cantos being imitated in the ridiculous quatrains prefixed to the cantos of *Hudibras*. The following extract refers to the clamour in the city against the Church of England about the commencement of the civil war:—

"The oyster-women locked their fish up,
And trudged away to cry No Bishop:
The mouse-trap men laid save-alls by,
And 'gainst ev'l counsellors did cry:

Botchers left old cloaths in the lurch
And fell to turn and patch the church;
Some cry'd the Covenant, instead
Of pudding-pies and ginger-bread;
And some for brooms, old boots and shoes,
Bawl'd out to purge the Commons-house;
Instead of kitchen-stuff, some cry
A gospel-preaching ministry;" &c.

The satirical portraits in *Absalom and Ahitophel* are drawn with a masterly hand. They include the leading statesmen and politicians of the Whig party towards the end of the reign of Charles II. The occasion of the satire was furnished by a plot, matured by the busy brain of Shaftesbury, for placing on the throne at the king's death his natural son the Duke of Monmouth, to the exclusion of his brother the Duke of York. The story of Absalom's rebellion supplied a parallel, singularly close in some respects, of which Dryden availed himself to the utmost. Absalom is the Duke of Monmouth, Ahitophel, his crafty adviser, is the Earl of Shaftesbury, David stands for Charles II., Zimri for the Duke of Buckingham, &c. &c. Some of the characters, though men of mark at the time, have ceased to figure in history; and the satire on them interests us but little. But the sketches of Shaftesbury, Halifax, Buckingham, and Titus Oates, derive an interest, independently of the skill and vigour of the drawing, from the historical importance of the persons represented. Shaftesbury is thus described:—

"Of these the false Ahitophel was first,
A name to all succeeding ages curst:
For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfixed in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which working out its way
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er informed the tenement of clay.
* * * * *
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;

Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease;
And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son?"

Halifax, known as the "Trimmer," who defeated the Exclusion Bill, is the subject of a few laudatory lines: —

"Jotham, of piercing wit and pregnant thought;
Endowed by nature, and by learning taught
To move assemblies, who but only tried
The worse awhile, then chose the better side;
Nor chose alone, but turned the balance too,
So much the weight of one brave man can do."

The following sketch of the Duke of Buckingham may be compared with that by Pope (see p. 301): —

"Some of their chiefs were princes of the land:
In the first rank of these did Zimri stand;
A man so various, that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by fits, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ
With something new to wish or to enjoy!
* * * * *
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late,
He had his jest, and they had his estate."

Oates, the chief witness in the Popish plot of 1680, is the object of a long rolling fire of invectives, from which we can only extract a few lines: —

"His memory, miraculously great,
Could plots, exceeding man's belief, repeat;
Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
For human wit could never such devise.

Some future truths are mingled in his book;
But where the witness failed, the prophet spoke;
Some things like visionary flight appear:
The spirit caught him up, — the Lord knows where;
And gave him his rabbinical degree,
Unknown to foreign university."

Since Dryden we have had no political satirist comparable to Moore. In the *Fudge Family in Paris*, the letters of Mr. Phelim Fudge to his employer, Lord Castlereagh, are an ironical picture of European society from the point of view of the Holy Alliance. The *Parody on a celebrated Letter* — that addressed by the Prince Regent to the Duke of York in 1812—is a piece of cutting satire, in which every line has its open or covert sting.

Among the many shorter poems which fall under the description of political satire, none has attained greater notoriety than *Lilliburlero*, or better deserved it than the *Vicar of Bray*. The doggerel stanzas of the former were sung all over England about the time of the landing of William III., and are said to have contributed much to stir up the popular hatred against James. The *Vicar of Bray* is a witty narrative of the changes in political sentiment which a beneficed clergyman, whose fundamental principle it is to stick to his benefice, might be supposed to undergo between the reigns of Charles II. and George I. The first and the last stanzas are subjoined: —

"In good King Charles's golden days,
When loyalty no harm meant,
A zealous high-church man I was,
And so I got preferment.
To teach my flock I never missed,
Kings are by God appointed,
And cursed are they that do resist,
Or touch the Lord's anointed;
And this is law," &c.

* * * * *

"The illustrious house of Hanover,
And Protestant succession,
To them I do allegiance swear —
While they can keep possession,

For in my faith and loyalty
I never more will falter,
And George my lawful King shall be —
Until the times do alter:
And this is law, I will maintain,
Until my dying day, Sir,
That whatsoever King shall reign,
I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir,"

Pastoral Poetry: — Spenser, Pope, Shenstone.

Of the pastoral poetry of Greece, such as we have it in the exquisite *Idyls* of Theocritus, our English specimens are but a weak and pale reflection. The true pastoral brings us to the sloping brow of the hill, while the goats are browsing below; and on a rustic seat, opposite a statue of Priapus, we see the herdsmen singing or piping, yet shunning to try their skill in the mid-day heats, because they fear to anger Pan, who then "rests, being a-weary, from his hunting."* Even Virgil's *Eclogues*, graceful and musical as they are, possess but a secondary excellence; they are merely imitations of Theocritus, and do not body forth the real rural life of Italy. The only English poetry which bears the true pastoral stamp is that of Burns and other Scottish writers; — and for this reason — that, like the Greek pastoral, it is founded on reality; it springs out of the actual life and manner of thought of the Scottish peasant. If it is rough-hewn and harsh in comparison with its Southern prototype, that is but saying that the Scottish peasant, though not despicably endowed, is, neither intellectually nor æsthetically, the equal of the Greek.

The chief pastoral poems that we have, are Spenser's *Shepherd's Kalendar*, Drayton's *Eclogues*, Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, and Pope's and Shenstone's *Pastorals*,

* *Theocritus*, Idyl I.

besides innumerable shorter pieces. It is scarcely worth while to make extracts. Browne's so-called pastorals ought rather to be classed as descriptive poems, since they are destitute of that dramatic character which the true pastoral (which is, in fact, a rudimentary drama) should always possess. Pope's *Pastorals* are close imitations of Theocritus, with the usual complement of Damons, Strephons, and Delias. The scenery professes to be in Windsor Forest and along the banks of the Thames, but it is, in great part, imaginary. Shenstone's *Pastoral Ballad* has some delicately-turned phrases; we subjoin a stanza or two: —

"When forced the fair nymph to forego,
What anguish I felt at my heart!
Yet I thought — but it might not be so —
'Twas with pain that she saw me depart.
She gazed, as I slowly withdrew;
My path I could hardly discern;
So sweetly she bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return."

The nymph proves faithless; and "disappointment" is the burden of the concluding part or canto of the poem: —

"Alas! from the day that we met,
What hope of an end to my woes?
When I cannot endure to forget
The glance that undid my repose.
Yet time may diminish the pain;
The flower, and the shrub, and the tree,
Which I reared for her pleasure in vain,
In time may have comfort for me."

Descriptive Poetry: — "Poly-olbion," "Cooper's Hill," "The Seasons."

This kind of poetry labours under the want of definite form and scope; it is accumulative, not organic; and consequently is avoided, or but seldom used, by the greater masters of the art. The most bulky specimen of descrip-

tive verse that we possess is Drayton's *Poly-olbion;* the most celebrated, Thomson's *Seasons.* The *Poly-olbion* is a sort of British gazetteer; it describes the most noted spots or towns in every English county, with historical illustrations. The poem shows great imaginative as well as descriptive power; so that one wonders at the patient industry with which a man, whose gifts qualified him for higher things, must have worked out his dull task. The diction is simple and strong, and tends to the Saxon side of the language, as the following extract shows:—

"Of Albion's glorious isle, the wonders whilst I write,
The sundry varying soils, the pleasures infinite,
Where heat kills not the cold, nor cold expels the heat,
The calms too mildly small, nor winds too roughly great,
Nor night doth hinder day, nor day the night doth wrong,
The summer not too short, the winter not too long—
What help shall I invoke to aid my muse the while?
Thou genius of the place! this most renownèd isle,
Which livedst long before the all-earth-drowning flood,
Whilst yet the earth did swarm with her gigantic brood,
Go thou before me still, thy circling shores about,
Direct my course so right, as with thy hand to show
Which way thy forests range, which way thy rivers flow,
Wise genius, by thy help that so I may descry
How thy fair mountains stand, and how thy valleys lie."

Cooper's Hill, by Sir John Denham, has the beautiful and often-quoted passage descriptive of the Thames:—

"Thames—the most loved of all the Ocean's sons
By his old sire—to his embraces runs,
Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
Like mortal life to meet eternity.
Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,
Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold,
His genius and less guilty wealth to explore,
Search not his bottom, but survey his shore;
O'er which he kindly spreads his spacious wing,
And hatches plenty for the ensuing spring;
Nor then destroys it with too fond a stay,
Like mothers which their infants over-lay,
Nor with a sudden and impetuous wave,
Like profuse kings, resumes the wealth he gave;

No unexpected inundations spoil
The mower's hopes, nor mock the ploughman's toil;
But godlike his unwearied bounty flows;
First loves to do, then loves the good he does;
Nor are his blessings to his banks confined,
But free and common as the sea, or wind,
When he, to boast or to disperse his stores,
Full of the tributes of his grateful shores,
Visits the world, and in his flying towers,
Brings home to us, and makes both Indies ours;
Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it where it wants,
Cities in deserts, woods in cities, plants;
So that to us no thing, no place is strange,
While his fair bosom is the world's exchange.
O might I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

Of Pope's *Windsor Forest*, Johnson has remarked, "The design of *Windsor Forest* is evidently taken from *Cooper's Hill*, with some attention to Waller's poem on *The Park*. . . . . The objection made by Dennis is the want of plan, or a regular subordination of parts terminating in the principal and original design. There is this want in most descriptive poems; because, as the scenes which they must exhibit successively, are all subsisting at the same time, the order in which they are shown must by necessity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the last part than the first."

Thomson's *Seasons*, a poem in blank verse, in four books, bear some resemblance, though no comparison, to Virgil's *Georgics*. The descriptions of the appearances of nature, the habits of animals, and the manners of men, are generally given with truthful and vivid delineation. The more ambitious flights — if a fine panegyric on Peter the Great be excepted — in which he paints great characters of ancient or modern story, or philosophizes, or plays the moralist — are less successful. Even in describing nature, Thomson betrays a signal want of imagination; he saw

correctly what was before him — the outward shows of things — but never had a glimpse of

> "The light that never *was* on sea or land,
> The inspiration, and the poet's dream."

There are passages from which the author might be set down as a pantheist; but poets are often inconsistent; and, as Pope disclaimed the fatalism which seems to be taught by the *Essay on Man*, so Thomson might have declined to father the pantheism which seems to pervade the following lines, if expressed in sober prose: —

> "What is this mighty breath, ye sages, say,
> That in a powerful language, felt, not heard,
> Instructs the fowls of heaven, and through their breast
> These arts of love diffuses? What but God?
> Inspiring God! who, boundless Spirit all,
> And unremitting energy, pervades,
> Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole."

A passage at the end of *Spring* contains a well-known line —

> "Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
> To teach the young idea how to shoot,
> To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
> To breathe the enlivening spirit, and to fix
> The generous purpose in the glowing breast."

The lines on the robin, in *Winter*, are in Thomson's best manner: —

> "The fowls of heaven,
> Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
> The winnowing store, and claim the little boon
> Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
> The red-breast, sacred to the household gods,
> Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,
> In joyless fields and thorny thickets leaves
> His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
> His annual visit. Half-afraid, he first
> Against the window beats; then, brisk, alights
> On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,
> Eyes all the smiling family askance,
> And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is;
> Till, more familiar grown, the table-crumbs
> Attract his slender feet."

Lyrical Poetry: — Devotional, Loyal, Patriotic, Amatory, Bacchanalian, Martial.

Lyrical poetry, as its name denotes, implied originally that the words were accompanied by lively music. A rapid movement, and a corresponding rapidity in the verse, are essential to it. It is the glowing utterance of minds, not calm and thoughtful, but excited and impassioned; it appertains, therefore, to the affective and emotional side of human nature, and has nothing to do with the reasoning and meditative side. Wordsworth, in pursuance of a poetical theory, published in his youth a collection of *Lyrical Ballads*, but they were not lyrical; because there was no passion in them, and much reflection. In later life, he wisely changed their designation.

There are certain main lyrical themes, corresponding to the passions and emotions which exercise the most agitating sway over the human heart. These are, Devotion, Loyalty, Patriotism, Love, War, and Revelry. We will take each theme separately, and from among the innumerable lyrical compositions which adorn our literature, select a very few, as a sample of the riches of the land. The task of selection is much facilitated by the recent publication of a book called *The Golden Treasury*, being a collection of the best songs and lyrics in the language, admirably edited by Mr. Palgrave.

1. Among devotional lyrics there is none nobler than Milton's *Christmas Ode*. Hallam pronounces it to be "perhaps the finest ode in the English language." A certain ruggedness of diction partially disfigures the later stanzas; but, taking the poem as a whole, the music of the numbers is worthy of the stately yet swift march of the thought. We must find space for the opening and concluding stanzas:—

"It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature in awe to him
Had doffed her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathise:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

"Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow;
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

"But He, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace;
She, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes an universal peace through sea and land.

"No war or battle sound
Was heard the world around,
The idle spear and shield were high uphung;
The hookèd chariot stood
Unstained with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovereign Lord was by."

The discomfiture and flight of the Heathen divinities upon the advent of the Redeemer, and the silence of the oracles, are then described, and the ode concludes with the following stanzas:—

"So when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave;

And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

"But see, the Virgin blest
Hath laid her babe to rest;
Time is, our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright harnessed angels sit, in order serviceable."

Crashaw's lyrics of devotion are often beautiful, though their effect is injured by the conceits in which he, as a writer of the fantastic school, was wont to indulge. Dryden is the author of a fine paraphrase of the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*. Addison also wrote some good paraphrases. His version of one of the Psalms, "The Lord my pasture shall prepare," and the hymn beginning "The spacious firmament on high," deserve especial mention. Pope's *Messiah* is a lyrical eclogue in imitation of the fourth eclogue of Virgil; but it is not to be compared in merit to the noble and almost inspired address to Pollio. In his hymn entitled *The Dying Christian to his Soul*, Pope essayed to rival Dryden and Addison in this field also. The effort cannot be pronounced unsuccessful; yet the art and labour employed are too transparent, and the ejaculations have a slightly theatrical cast:—

"Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, oh! quit, this mortal frame;
Trembling, hoping, lingering, dying,
O the pain, the bliss, of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

"The world recedes, it disappears;
Heaven opens on my eyes; my ears
With sounds seraphic ring;
Lend, lend your wings; I mount; I fly;
O Grave; where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?"

In the present century Byron and Moore have each tried their hand at sacred lyrics. The *Hebrew Melodies* of the former, and the *Sacred Melodies* of the latter, contain pieces of great lyrical beauty. In the art of wedding words to sounds, no English poet ever excelled, or perhaps equalled, Moore. This gift is exhibited in the following sacred melody, which is but a sample of a great number, all equally felicitous in this respect:—

"Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea;
Jehovah hath triumphed; his people are free.
Sing; for the might of the tyrant is broken,
His chariots, his horsemen, so splendid and brave;
How vain was their boasting! the Lord hath but spoken,
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.

"Praise to the conqueror, praise to the Lord!
His word was our arrow, his breath was our sword.
Who shall return to tell Egypt the story
Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride?
The Lord but look'd forth from His pillar of glory,
And all her brave thousands are whelm'd in the tide."

2. Of the loyal songs with which our poetry abounds, certain classes only can be said to possess real excellence. When it is on the winning side, loyalty loses its passion and its pathos; its effusions tend to become interested, and lie under the suspicion of servility. It is for this reason that such poems as Dryden's *Astræa Redux* and Addison's heroics in honour of William III. fall flat and cold on the ear. But when loyalty is struggling, or when it is persecuted, it is a noble, because a disinterested, sentiment, and it gives birth to noble poems. In our own history these conditions have been present on two occasions — during the civil war, and after the Revolution of 1688. The Royalist and the Jacobite songs are therefore the only loyal lyrics which need arrest our attention. Of the former class we shall quote a portion of the well-known lines composed by the gallant Lovelace while in prison:—

"When Love with unconfinèd wings
Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty.
* * * *
"When, linnet-like confinèd, I
With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
And glories of my King;
When I shall voice aloud how good
He is, how great should be,
Enlargèd winds, that curl the flood,
Know no such liberty.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
These for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love,
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty."

The Jacobite songs, which are mostly of unknown authorship, are full of spirit and fire, and possess that melancholy charm which belongs to a great cause vainly maintained by high-souled men against an overpowering destiny. We select the following specimen: —

"To daunton me an' me sae young,
An' gude King James' auldest son!
O that 's the thing that ne'er can be,
For the man 's unborn that will daunton me!

"O set me ance on Scottish land,
An' gie me my braid-sword in my hand,
Wi' my blue bonnet aboon my bree,
An' show me the man that will daunton me!

---

* From Cromek's Songs of Nithsdale.

"It 's nae the battle's deadly stoure,
Nor friends pruived fause, that 'll gar me cower;
But the reckless hand o' povertie,
O! that alane can daunton me!

"High was I born to kingly gear,
But a cuif* came in my cap to wear;
But wi' my braid-sword I 'll let him see
He 's nae the man will daunton me."

The best and most spirited of these Jacobite lyrics are to be found in Ritson's *Collection of Scottish Songs*, or Hogg's *Jacobite Relics.*

3. That "amour sacré de la patrie," which in all countries is a fruitful theme for the Lyric muse, is among ourselves by no means homogeneous. We have Scotch patriotism, Irish patriotism, and British or imperial patriotism, and noble lyrics inspired by each. Lastly, as there is a poetical justice, so there is a poetical patriotism —a feeling which usually goes abroad to seek for its objects, and is eloquent upon the wrongs sustained by foreign nationalities. Scotland vents her patriotic fervour in Burns' manly lines, supposed to be addressed by Bruce to his army before the battle of Bannockburn. Her poets find her ancient triumphs over England more soul-inspiring than any of those which her sons have, since the Union, assisted her great neighbour to achieve. For patriotism is intense in proportion to its local concentration; and zeal for the preservation of the integrity of a great empire, though it may produce the same course of action, is an affair of the reason rather than of the feelings, and therefore less likely to give rise to lyrical developments. Two stanzas from the song above mentioned are subjoined: —

"Wha wad be a traitor knave,
Wha wad fill a coward's grave,

* Worthless fellow.

Wha sae base as be a slave?
Coward! turn and flee!

"Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa'?
Scotsman! on wi' me!"

Sir Walter Scott was by reason and principle a staunch imperialist, and his poem on Waterloo illustrates the general or British element in his patriotism. But how cold and tame it reads compared with the glowing lines which burst from his lips, as his heart broods over the rugged charms of his own Caledonia! —

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there be, go mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.
Oh! Caledonia, stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand,
Still as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as, to me of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's streams still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;

Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The bard may draw his parting groan."

Irish patriotism blooms, as might be expected, into verse of a mournful, almost of an elegiac, cast. Moore's poetry furnishes us with many beautiful specimens, among which the following lines, entitled "After the Battle," are not the least beautiful: —

"Night closed upon the conqueror's way,
And lightnings showed the distant hill,
Where they who lost that dreadful day
Stood few and faint, but fearless still.
The soldier's hope, the patriot's zeal,
For ever dimmed, for ever crossed;
Oh! who can tell what heroes feel,
When all but life and honour's lost!

"The last sad hour of freedom's dream,
And valour's task, moved slowly by,
While mute they watched, till morning's beam
Should rise, and give them light to die!
There is a world where souls are free,
Where tyrants taint not nature's bliss;
If death that world's bright opening be,
Oh! who would live a slave in this?"

British — if it should not rather be called English — patriotism, has produced such poems as Glover's *Hosier's Ghost*, Cowper's *Boadicea*, and Campbell's *Mariners of England*. From the *Boadicea* we extract a portion of the Druid's address to the patriot queen of the Iceni: —

"Rome, for empire far renowned,
Tramples on a thousand states;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground —
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates.

"Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

"Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway:
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they."

Poetical patriotism inspired Gray's *Bard*, Byron's *Isles of Greece*, and Shelley's *Hellas*. In the first-named poem, the last of the Welsh bards, standing on a crag that overhangs the pass through which King Edward and his army are defiling, invokes ruin on the race and name of the oppressor of his country, and at the conclusion of his hymn of vengeful despair flings himself into the sea. Byron's noble lyric is so well known that we shall not spoil it by quotation, but prefer to extract portions of two choruses from Shelley's *Hellas*, in which, with the enthusiasm of genius, the poet paints an ideal future for enfranchised and regenerate Greece: —

"—— Temples and towers,
Citadels and marts, and they
Who live and die there, have been ours,
And may be thine, and must decay;
But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought, and its eternity;
Her citizens, imperial spirits,
Rule the present from the past,
On all this world of men inherits
Their seal is set."

But this is not enough; Greece herself is to live again: —

"A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far:
A new Penëus rolls its fountains
Against the morning star,

Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a summer deep:
A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

"O write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be!
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free;
Although a subtler Sphynx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

"Another Athens shall arise,
And, to remoter time,
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendour of her prime;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take, or heaven can give."

4. Love songs, or amatory lyrics, may be counted by hundreds in all our poetical collections. With the earlier poets, Venus is generally found in close alliance with Bacchus; and the sentiment which inspires their strains is of a grosser kind than that which the refining mystical poets of later times have introduced. Moore in this respect resembles the poets of the Elizabethan and Stuart periods rather than his own contemporaries. We shall give one or two specimens of both styles, beginning with Ben Jonson's graceful lines *To Celia*: —

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I 'll not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

"I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon didst only breathe
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee!"

Some of Shakspeare's sonnets might well be quoted in this connection, particularly that beginning, "Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye?" The exquisite lines which follow occur in *Measure for Measure*: —

"Take, O take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn,
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn:
But my kisses bring again,
Bring again—
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,
Sealed in vain!"

Marlowe's "Come, live with me and be my love," and Raleigh's reply, "If all the world and love were young," are beautiful specimens of what may be called the pastoral love song. Waller's "Go, lovely Rose," and Carew's "He that loves a rosy cheek," are in all books of extracts; but the latter poet's "Give me more love or more disdain" is omitted in the Golden Treasury and several other collections; we shall therefore quote it: —

"Give me more love, or more disdain;
The torrid or the frozen zone
Bring equal ease unto my pain,
The temperate affords me none;
Either extreme of love or hate
Is sweeter than a calm estate.

"Give me a storm;— if it be love,
Like Danäe in that golden shower,
I swim in pleasure; if it prove
Disdain —that torrent will devour

My vulture hopes, and he's possessed
Of heaven, that's but from hell released;
Then crown my joys or cure my pain;
Give me more love or more disdain."

Milton, Dryden, and Pope, furnish us with nothing to quote under this head. When we come to modern times, the difficulty lies in the selection. What treasures of lyrical force and sweetness are contained in the love songs of Burns! We must give at least one example: —

"O Mary, at thy window be,
It is the wished, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blythely wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

"Yestreen when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing —
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed, and said amang them a',
'Ye are na Mary Morison.'

"O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
Wha for thy sake wad gladly dee?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison."

In grace and melody, if not in pathos, Moore's love songs may be matched with those of Burns, as the following lines exemplify: —

"Take back the virgin page
White and unwritten still;
Some hand more calm and sage
That leaf must fill;

Thoughts come as pure as light,
Pure as even you require,
But oh! each word I write
Love turns to fire.

"Yet let me keep the book;
Oft shall my heart renew,
When on its leaves I look,
Dear thoughts of you.
Like you, 'tis fair and bright;
Like you, too bright and fair
To let wild passion write
One wrong wish there.

"Haply, when from those eyes
Far, far away I roam,
Should calmer thoughts arise
Towards thee and home,
Fancy may trace some line
Worthy those eyes to meet,
Thoughts that not burn but shine,
Pure, calm, and sweet."

* * * * *

Byron's *Maid of Athens*, Shelley's *Epithalamium*, and Coleridge's *Geneviève*, we must be content with naming.

5. Revelry is a lyrical theme which has been largely illustrated by our poets, especially by those of the seventeenth century. We must confine ourselves to a single specimen, taken from Cowley: —

"The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,
And drinks, and gapes for drink again.
The plants suck in the earth, and are
With constant drinking fresh and fair.
The sea itself, which one would think
Should have but little need of drink,
Drinks ten thousand rivers up
So fill'd that they o'erflow the cup.
The busy sun (and one would guess
By his drunken fiery face no less)
Drinks up the sea, and when he 's done,
The moon and stars drink up the sun.
They drink and dance by their own light;
They drink and revel all the night.

Nothing in Nature 's sober found,
But an eternal health goes round.
Fill up the bowl, then, fill it high,
Fill all the glasses there, for why
Should every creature drink but I?
Why, men of morals, tell me why?"

6. The lyrics of war, whatever may be the reason, are not found in great numbers, nor of extraordinary merit, in English literature. We might mention Campbell's *Hohenlinden* and *Battle of the Baltic*, the stirring ballad of *Count Albert*, and the gathering-song *Pibroch of Donuil Dhu*, both by Scott, and Macaulay's ballads of *Naseby* and *Ivry*, and *Lays of Rome*. In Dryden's great lyric, *Alexander's Feast*, the "mighty master" of the lyre, after successfully preluding upon the themes of love and revelry, thus in a bolder strain summons the hero to war: —

"Now strike the golden lyre again:
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain:
Break his bands of sleep asunder
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head,
As awaked from the dead
And amazed he stares around:
Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,
See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew!
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes
And glittering temples of the hostile gods.

The princes applaud with a furious joy,
And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And like another Helen, fired another Troy!"

Elegiac Poetry:—"Fidele," "The Castaway," "Lycidas," "Adonais."

English poetry, in sympathy with the sad and lowering skies of our northern climate, is never more powerful and pathetic than when heard in the accents of mourning. The influences of external nature and of the national temperament dispose our poets to taciturnity and thoughtfulness; and in a world so full of change and death, thoughtfulness easily passes into sadness. Elegiac poems may be distinguished as objective or subjective, according as their tenor and general aim may be, either simply to occupy themselves with the fortunes, character, and acts of the departed, or to found a train of musings, having reference to self, or at least strongly coloured by the writer's personality, upon the fact of bereavement. Among those of the former class may be specified — the dirge in Cymbeline, Milton's sonnet on Shakspeare, Dryden's elegy on Cromwell, Tickell's on Addison, Cowper's lines on the *Loss of the Royal George*, Campbell's *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, the song of Harold in the Lay of the Last Minstrel, Cowper's *Castaway*, and Pope's *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*. Nothing can exceed the simple beauty of the song of the brothers over the body of Fidele: *—

"Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney sweepers, come to dust.

"Fear no more the frown o' the great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;

---

* *Cymbeline*, Act iv. Sc. 2.

Care no more to clothe and eat:
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

"Fear no more the lightning flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finish'd joy and moan;
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust."

Cowper's lines on the loss of the Royal George sound like the passing bell: —

"Toll for the brave!
The brave that are no more!
All sunk beneath the wave
Fast by their native shore!"

The *Castaway*, by the same author, combines what is most touching in both kinds of elegy. After a minute description of the long struggle for life of the sailor lost over-board, the interest of the tale, great in itself, is suddenly rendered tenfold more intense by the application of it in the last stanza to the case of the unhappy writer :—

"No voice divine the storm allayed,
No light propitious shone,
When, far from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone;
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in blacker gulfs than he."

A similar turn is given to the conclusion of Pope's *Elegy*: —

"So peaceful rests without a stone, a name,
What once had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame!
How lov'd — how honour'd once, avails thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot;
A heap of dust alone remains of thee —
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be!
Poets themselves must fall like those they sung;
Deaf the prais'd ear, and mute the tuneful tongue;
E'en he whose soul now melts in mournful lays
Shall shortly want the generous tear he pays.

Then from his closing eyes thy form shall part,
And the last pang shall tear thee from his heart;
Life's idle business at one gasp be o'er,
The muse forgot, and thou belov'd no more!"

Among elegies of the subjective class may be mentioned the lines written by Raleigh the night before his death, Cowley's elegy on Crashaw, Milton's *Lycidas*, Gray's *Elegy in a Country Church-yard*, and Shelley's *Adonais*. At the close of his meteor-like career the gallant Raleigh wrote his own epitaph in these few pious and feeling lines: —

"Even such is Time, that takes on trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days!
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
The Lord shall raise me up, I trust!"

Lycidas was written by Milton to commemorate the death of a college friend, Mr. King, who was drowned on the passage from England to Ireland. But Milton's grief sets him thinking; and in this remarkable poem the monotone of a deep sorrow is replaced by the linked musings of a mind, which, once set in motion by grief, pours forth abundantly the treasures of thought and imagination stored up within it. The following eloquent passage contains a line that has almost passed into a proverb: —

"Alas! what boots it with incessant care
To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,

And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears;
'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies:
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-seeing Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

So also in *Adonais*, which is an elegy on Keats, the glorious imagination of Shelley transports him into regions far beyond the reach of the perturbations of a common grief: —

"The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the land, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven;
I am borne darkly, fearfully afar;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are."

It would be impossible to give an adequate idea of Gray's famous elegy by a short extract, but the student is recommended to read the entire poem carefully. He will find it eminently subjective in spirit; and may compare it with Hamlet's moralisings over the skull of Yorick. Both may be regarded as products of a mind in which there is a morbid preponderance of the contemplative faculty — the balance not being duly maintained between the impressions from outward objects and the inward operations of the intellect.*

* See Coleridge's remarks on Hamlet. *Literary Remains*, vol. ii. p. 204.

Miscellaneous Poems.

A large number of poems, chiefly belonging to modern times, still remain unnoticed, because they refuse to be classified under any of the received and long-established designations. This miscellaneous section we propose to divide into —

1. Poems founded on the Passions and Affections.
2. Poems of Sentiment and Reflection.
3. Poems of Imagination and Fancy.
4. Philosophical poetry.

1. Poems of the first kind are evidently of the lyrical order, but they are not to be classed among lyrics, because they are deficient in the excitation of thought and rapidity of movement which the true lyric must exhibit. They occur in great numbers in the works of modern poets, and, if a type of excellence in the kind were required, a purer one could not easily be found than Wordsworth's *Michael*. Many have seen the unfinished sheepfold in Green Head Ghyll, referred to in the following lines, which Michael, the old Westmoreland "statesman," after the news had come that the son so tenderly cherished had brought disgrace and peril on his head, had never afterwards the heart to complete: —

> "There is a comfort in the strength of love;
> 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
> Would overset the brain, or break the heart.
> I have conversed with more than one, who well
> Remember the old man, and what he was
> Years after he had heard this heavy news.
> His bodily frame had been from youth to age
> Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
> He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
> And listened to the wind; and, as before,
> Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
> And for the land, his small inheritance.
> And to that hollow dell from time to time

Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old man — and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.
There, by the sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The cottage which was named the Evening Star
Is gone — the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood; — yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen,
Beside the boisterous brook of Green Head Ghyll."

Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*, a poem in which love, pride, repentance, and despair seem to be striving together for the mastery, and an overcharged heart seeks relief in bursts of wild half-frenzied eloquence, must also be placed among poems of this class.

2. Sentiment may be regarded as the synthesis of thought and feeling; and therefore poems of this second class hold an intermediate place between those founded on the passions and affections, and those in which intellectual faculties are, solely or principally, exercised. They are very numerous in every period of our literary history. Spenser's *Ruines of Time* is an early and very beautiful example. In the midst of a personified presentment of Fame, the wish recorded of Alexander is thus strikingly related: —

"But Fame with golden wing aloft doth flie
Above the reach of ruinous decay,
And with brave plumes doth beat the azure skie

Admir'd of base-born men from farre away;
Then whoso will by vertuous deeds assay
To mount to heaven, on Pegasus must ride,
And by sweet poets' verse be glorified.

"For not to have been dipt in Lethe lake
Could save the son of Thetis from to die,
But that blind bard did him immortal make
With verses, dipped in dew of Castalie;
Which made the Eastern Conquerour to crie,
'O fortunate young man, whose vertue found
So brave a trump, thy noble acts to sound.'"

Sir John Davies's poem on the *Immortality of the Soul* may be classed either with the present series, or under the head of didactic poetry. The poetry of Quarles is partly sentimental, partly fantastic. A fine couplet occurs in the poem entitled *Faith*: —

"Brave minds oppressed, should, in despite of Fate,
Look greatest, like the sun, in lowest state."

The *Soul's Errand*, said to be by Raleigh, Milton's *Penseroso*, Dryden's *Religio Laici*, and Burns' *Cotter's Saturday Night*, are additional examples. Cowper's *Lines on his Mother's Picture* deserve special mention. The chief merits of this celebrated poem are — a remarkable tenderness and purity of feeling; the vividness of imagination with which past scenes and circumstances are represented; and, occasionally, dignity of thought couched in graceful expressions. Its demerits are — the egotistic strain which is apt to infect a poet who leads an unemployed and retired life, leading him to dwell on circumstances trivial or vulgar, equally with those of a truly poetical cast, because they interest himself; and a lamentable inequality hence arising — such worthless lines as

"The biscuit or confectionary plum,"

or

"I pricked them into paper with a pin,"

occurring side by side with others most musical and suggestive, such as —

> "Children not thine have trod my nursery floor,"

and

> "Time has but half succeeded in his theft —
> Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left."

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage must also be ranked with poems of sentiment and reflection; for although in form it resembles a descriptive poem, that which gives it its peculiar character is not the description of any external scenes, but the minute analysis and exhibition of the writer's feelings, reflections, and states of mind. The third canto, for instance, is in a great measure a piece of autobiography. Written in 1816, just after he had been separated from his wife and child, and, amidst a storm of obloquy, had passed into voluntary exile, this canto paints the revolt of Byron's tortured spirit against the world's opinion, to which, while he scorned it, he was to the last a slave. The moral of all the earlier portion is scarcely caricatured by the parody in the *Rejected Addresses*: —

> "Woe 's me! the brightest wreaths [Joy] ever gave,
> Are but as flowers that decorate a tomb.
> Man's heart, the mournful urn o'er which they wave,
> Is sacred to despair, its pedestal the grave."

Many lines current in general conversation, but often quoted in ignorance of the source whence they come, occur in *Childe Harold*. Few have not heard of those magnificent equivalents, by which the skull is described as —

> "The dome of Thought, the palace of the Soul!"

Again, O'Connell's favourite quotation at the Repeal meetings of 1844 is found in the second canto; it is an invocation to the modern Greeks: —

> "Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not,
> Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?"

At the ball given in Brussels on the night before the advance on Waterloo, we read that

"all went merry as a marriage bell."

And it is said of the young French general, Marceau, that

"——he *had kept*
The whiteness of his soul, and so men o'er him wept."

In this dream-land of sentiment, where the dry light of the intellect is variously coloured and modified by the play of the emotions, the magnificent shadowy ideas of Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* find their appropriate home. The leading thought of the poem may be gathered from the lines subjoined: —

"Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind —
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven's freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!"

3. Imagination and fancy are both intellectual faculties, and the main function of both is to detect and exhibit the resemblances which exist among objects of sense or intelligence. The difference between them, according to the

doctrine of Coleridge, may be generally stated thus: that whereas fancy exhibits only external resemblances, imagination loves to disclose the internal and essential relations which bind together things apparently unlike. Drayton's *Nymphidia* is the creation of a fancy the liveliest and most inventive, but shows little or no imaginative power. On the other hand, Shakspeare's *Venus and Adonis*, Milton's *L'Allegro*, and the most perfect among Shelley's poems, are works of imagination. If we analyse the series of comparisons of which Shelley makes his *Skylark* the subject, we shall find that in every case the likeness indicated lies deeper than the surface, and calls into play higher faculties than the mere intellectual reproduction of the impressions of sense: —

"Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

"Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

"Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

"Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves.

"Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass."

In the *Cloud*, by the same poet, the imagery is partly fantastic, partly imaginative, as may be seen in the following extract: —

"That orbed maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

* * * * *

"I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky:
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams, with their convex gleams,
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again."

4. The philosophical is distinguished from the didactic poem by the absence of a set moral purpose. In the *Essay on Man*, Pope starts with the design of "vindicating the ways of God;" and, whatever may be thought of the mode of vindication, this design is adhered to throughout. Nor, again, does the philosophical poem, like the narrative or epic, embody a definite story, with beginning, middle, and end. Its parts may indeed be connected, as in the case of the *Excursion*, by a slight narrative thread; but its characteristic excellence does not depend upon this, but upon

the mode in which the different subjects and personages introduced are philosophically handled, and, it may perhaps be said, on the soundness of the philosophy itself. How far the pursuit of these objects is consistent with the full production of that kind of pleasure which it is the business of poetry to excite, is a question difficult of decision.

Wordsworth's *Excursion* is the longest and most important philosophical poem which our literature contains. The thread which binds together its parts is a supposed excursion among the mountains, taken by the author in company with his friend the Wanderer, in the course of which they meet with the Solitary, a soured and despondent recluse, and with the excellent village pastor, whose parochial experiences furnish materials for unlimited philosophising. Long conversations, arguments, and communications of their respective antecedents, pass between these four personages, and form the substance of this very bulky poem. The *Excursion* consists of nine books; but, from the nature of the plan, there is evidently no reason why it should not contain as many more. It is in fact, as has been already stated,* but the second part of a large work, of which the third and concluding part was planned but never executed; the first part was completed, but never published, and the manuscript is understood to be in the hands of Wordsworth's literary executor.†

* See p. 231.

† The extract from this unpublished part, inserted in the introduction to the *Excursion*, is so excellent as to induce the earnest hope that Mr. Carter will shortly give to the world the entire manuscript.

CHAPTER II.

PROSE WRITINGS.

A ROUGH general classification and description of the subject-matter, with a few critical sketches of particular works, or groups of works, is all that we shall attempt in the present volume.

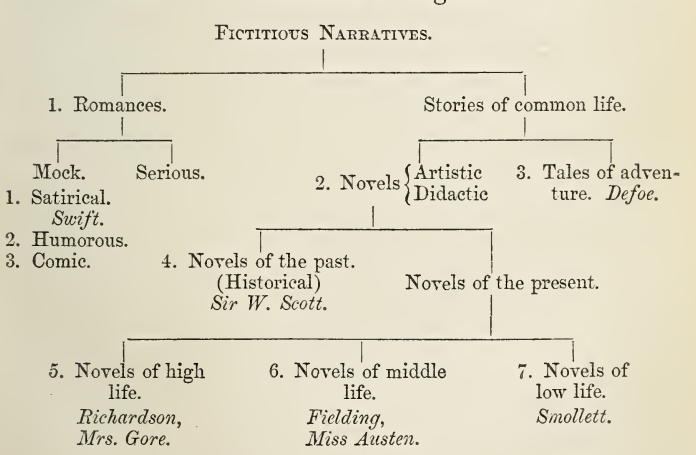
The prose writings of our literature may be arranged under the following six heads: —

1. Works of fiction.
2. Works of satire, wit, and humour.
3. Oratory; (with the connected departments of Journal-writing and Pamphleteering.)
4. History; (including, besides history proper, biography and narrative works of all kinds, as subsidiary branches.)
5. Theology.
6. Philosophy; (including, besides philosophy proper, essays and political treatises, and all works of thought and theory, e.g. æsthetics and literary criticism.)

Prose Fiction.

By a work of fiction a *narrative* work is always understood. A fiction which describes, not imaginary actions, but an imaginary state of things, such as More's *Utopia*, must be considered as a work of thought and theory, and will fall under our sixth head. Works of fiction, then, or fictitious narratives, are of two kinds — those in which the agencies are natural, and those in which they are not. In the latter case they are called romances, in the former,

stories of common life. Romances are either mock or serious; — and mock romances may be either satirical, humorous, or comic. Stories of common life are divided into tales of adventure and novels; the novel being in its purest form the correlative in prose of the epic poem in poetry, and, like it, treating of "one great complex action, in a lofty style, and with fullness of detail."* Whatever be its form, the novel must possess unity of plan, and is thereby distinguishable from the mere tale of adventure or travel, in which this unity is not required. Novels, again, may either refer to the past — in which case they are called historical novels — or to the present. If the latter, they admit of a further subdivision, according to the social level at which the leading characters move, into novels of high life — of middle life — and of low life. Further, there is a cross division applicable to the whole class of novels, into those of the artistic and those of the didactic kind. The following table exhibits the above classification of works of fiction at a glance: —


Fictitious Narratives.
1. Romances.
Stories of common life.
Mock.
Serious.
1. Satirical. Swift.
2. Humorous.
3. Comic.
2. Novels { Artistic / Didactic
3. Tales of adventure. Defoe.
4. Novels of the past. (Historical) Sir W. Scott.
Novels of the present.
5. Novels of high life. Richardson, Mrs. Gore.
6. Novels of middle life. Fielding, Miss Austen.
7. Novels of low life. Smollett.

1. The word romance is here used in a sense which

* See p. 267.

implies, that in works so called, some preternatural or supernatural agency is instrumental in working out the plot. We have not many serious romances in English; the *Grand Cyrus*, and other delectable productions of Scudèry and Calprenède, were read, admired, and translated amongst us in their day, but do not appear to have been imitated, at least in prose. *St. Leon*, by Godwin, *Frankenstein* or *The Ghost-seer*, by his daughter, Mrs. Shelley, and the *Old English Baron*, by Clara Reeve, are among the principal performances in this kind. The *Phantom Ship*, by Captain Marryatt, is a remarkable and beautiful story, founded on the grand old legend of the *Flying Dutchman*. One of the Waverley novels, the *Monastery*, in which the apparitions of the White Lady of Avenel have an important influence on the developement of the story, falls accordingly within the scope of our definition. The most notable examples of the mock romance are the *Travels of Lemuel Gulliver*. The comic variety is exemplified in the Voyages of Brobdingnag and Lilliput, the satirical in the Voyages to the Houyhnhnms and Laputa.

2. The distinction of novels into artistic and didactic is founded on the different aims which entered into their composition. The artistic novel aims at the beautiful representation of things and persons, such as they really appear in nature, or may be conceived capable of becoming; its purpose is æsthetic, and not moral. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* is a celebrated instance. The didactic novel has some special moral lesson in view, which the progress and issue of the story are intended to enforce. Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* and *Eugene Aram*, and the whole class of religious novels, are instances in point.

3. Among tales of adventure, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* bears the palm. Among the many imitations, more or less close, to which that celebrated production has given rise, may be particularised Miss Porter's *Narrative of*

Sir Edward Seaward, and Captain Marryatt's delightful story of *Masterman Ready*. The *Travels of Anastasius*, by Hope, enjoyed a great reputation fifty years ago.

4. Novels of the past are not all necessarily historical novels, since they may relate to supposed events in the *private* life of former ages, whereas by the historical novel is commonly understood a work of which the interest principally turns on the introduction of some personages or events of historic fame. Thus, Bulwer's *Last Days of Pompeii*, in which none of the characters are historical, can only, if at all, claim the title of a historical novel in virtue of the historic catastrophe — the great eruption of Vesuvius, which buried Pompeii in ashes in the reign of Vespasian.

In the historical novel, Sir Walter Scott, the inventor of the style, remains unapproached. Out of twenty-seven novels (omitting short tales), which compose the Waverley series, twenty are historical. The most remote period to which the author has ascended is the eleventh century, the events described in *Count Robert of Paris* being supposed to occur during the first crusade. This, however, is one of the latest and least interesting of the series. The *Betrothed*, the *Talisman*, and *Ivanhoe*, refer to the twelfth century; the grand romantic personage of Richard Cœur de Lion figuring prominently in both the novels last named. The thirteenth century seems to have had no attractions for our author; and even in the fourteenth — a period so memorable both in English and Scottish history — he has given us only the *Fair Maid of Perth* and *Castle Dangerous*; the striking story of *Rienzi* was left for Bulwer to appropriate, and work up into an historical fiction of the highest order. In the fifteenth century, the reign of Louis XI. is admirably illustrated in *Quentin Durward*; in which the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, is presented to us in the plenitude of his power and prosperity; while in *Anne of*

Geierstein we see that power humbled to the dust by the arms of the sturdy Switzers. The *Monastery*, with its sequel, the *Abbot*, exhibits the distracted state of Scotland during the religious wars of the sixteenth century. In *Kenilworth*, which belongs to the same period, the scene is laid in England, and the interest centres in Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the unfortunate Amy Robsart. The seventeenth century must have possessed a peculiar interest for Scott; for the plots of no less than five of his novels are laid in it, and some of these are among the most successful efforts of his genius. The learned fool James I. is introduced in the *Fortunes of Nigel*; the *Legend of Montrose* brings before us the exploits of that gallant but ill-starred chief, and creates for us the admirable portrait of the veteran soldier trained in the Thirty Years' War under Gustavus Adolphus, the incomparable Major Dalgetty;—Cromwell appears in *Woodstock*; *Peveril of the Peak* illustrates the startling contrasts which existed between the gay immoral society gathered round the court of Charles II., and the terrible puritan element beneath the surface, crushed down, but still formidable; — lastly, in *Old Mortality*, deemed by many to be the author's most perfect production, the plot is connected with the insurrection of the Scottish Covenanters in 1679, and brings before us the haughty form of Claverhouse. Four novels belong to the eighteenth century — *Rob Roy*, the *Heart of Mid-Lothian*, *Waverley*, and *Redgauntlet*. In the first, named, by the happy thought of Constable, Scott's publisher, after a noted Highland freebooter, who flourished in the early part of the century, the chief historic interest lies in the admirable art with which the story brings out the contrast then existing between the civilised law-respecting Lowlands, and the confused turbulent state of things a few miles off across the Highland border, where black-mail was levied and clannish custom was nearly supreme. In the *Heart of Mid-*

Lothian the incidents of the Porteus riots at Edinburgh in 1736 are interwoven with the plot, and Caroline, the generous and strong-minded queen of George II., is associated with her humble petitioner, Jeanie Deans. *Waverley* is a tale of the rising of the clans under the young Pretender in 1745; and *Redgauntlet* refers to a contemplated rising of the English Jacobites a few years later, which the unmanageable obstinacy of the Chevalier stifled in the birth.

5. In the novel of high life, the chief actors belong to the "upper ten thousand" of society. Richardson, who was himself the son of a joiner, delighted to paint the manners of this class, to which in all his novels the principal personages belong. As we read them, we associate with Sir Charles Grandisons and Lady G.s, with Harriet Byrons, Lovelaces, and Count Geronimos; an English squire or a foreign nobleman is the meanest company we frequent. Yet Richardson has high excellences; his characters are firmly yet delicately drawn; there is vigorous orginal outline, filled in and bodied out by a number of fine, almost imperceptible touches; the diction, though often copious to a fault, never sinks to mere verbiage; the story is always naturally and probably evolved; lastly, the author never obtrudes his own personality, but leaves his work before you, to impress you or not, according to its and your own intrinsic qualities. The clever novels of Mrs. Gore have a yet more limited range than those of Richardson; they paint the present generation, and therein only the inhabitants of May Fair, and frequenters of Rotten Row.

6. The immense majority of English novels portray the manners and characters which are common in the middle ranks of society. Not to speak of works by living authors — of the *Pickwick Papers* or *Vanity Fair* — all Fielding's novels,* *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones*, and

* For an admirable account of them and their author, see Thackeray's *Lectures on the English Humorists.*

Amelia, and those of Miss Austen and Miss Edgeworth, belong to this class. *Pride and Prejudice,* by Jane Austen, is the perfect type of a novel of common life; the story so concisely and dramatically told, the language so simple, the shades and half-shades of human character so clearly presented, and the operation of various motives so delicately traced — attest this gifted woman to have been the perfect mistress of her art. Under this head are also included such of Scott's novels as have no historical element, e. g. *Guy Mannering,* the *Antiquary,* the *Bride of Lammermoor,* &c.

7. The best specimens in our literature of the novel of low life are by living authors. Which of us has not turned vagrant with little Nell, and dived into the recesses of the Seven Dials with Fagin and the Artful Dodger? * *Paul Clifford* also, by Bulwer, belongs to this class; and, in the last century, Smollett's *Roderick Random* and several of Defoe's novels, which treat principally of uproarious scenes and rough characters, from which the sentimental Richardson would have recoiled in disgust.

2. Works of Satire, Wit, and Humour.

Among the best performances of this kind which our literature contains, are the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books* by Swift, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and *Sentimental Journey,* and the *Anti-Jacobin* by Canning, Ellis, and Frere.

An explanation has already been given of the title of the first among the works above named.† Swift tells us that it was composed when "his invention was at the height, and his reading fresh in his head." The "Epistle dedicatory to Prince Posterity" is a fine piece of irony

* Characters in the *Old Curiosity Shop* and *Oliver Twist.*

† See p. 180.

Dryden is maliciously mentioned in it as a poet, who, the prince would be surprised to hear, had written many volumes, and made a noise among his contemporaries. The tale itself, such as it is, relates the adventures of the brothers, Peter, Martin,* and Jack; and with the sections in which it is carried on, other sections alternate, in which the abuses of learning are exposed. The three brothers, as the names imply, are allegorical, and represent the Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic systems respectively. The book was eagerly read and discussed; — a thing little to be wondered at, when a satire expressed with inconceivable force and humour, and upon which all the resources of an unquestionably great genius had been expended, was directed against the religious belief and practice of the whole Catholic, and a large portion of the Protestant, world. But though admired, it was widely condemned. Smalridge, a divine of that age, when taxed with the authorship by Sacheverell, answered with indignation, "Not all that you and I have in the world, nor all that we ever shall have, should hire me to write the *Tale of a Tub*." Swift therefore found it necessary to prefix an "Apology" to the edition of 1709, in which he declared that his meaning had been misinterpreted in many places, and that his real object throughout was to serve pure religion and morality. But if this was his object, he chose a singular way of promoting it. Martin's proceedings, which are represented as rational and right, are disposed of in a page and a half; the rest of the work consists of satirical descriptions of Peter's knavery and mendacity, and of Jack's fanatical extravagance. Of course the

* That by "Martin" Swift originally meant Lutheranism, and not the Church of England, seems clear from the passage in the Fragment appended to the work, where he speaks of dropping "the former Martin" and substituting for him "Lady Bess's Institution," by which the Church of England could alone be meant. But it is likely that he was not unwilling, at a later period, to have it supposed that "Martin" stood for the Church of England.

general effect of the book is that of a satirical attack on Christianity itself. Voltaire's strong approval, and recommendation to his followers to peruse it, are conclusive as to the real relation in which it stands to religion. What chiefly delighted him was the vigour of the attacks on Peter. These, though highly humorous, are coarse, and sometimes revolting, particularly when it is considered that they came from a clergyman. They show plainly enough that Swift was at the time a cynic and a materialist, and utterly scouted all religion in his secret heart.

In the *Battle of the Books*, which, as already mentioned, is Swift's contribution to the controversy on the respective merits of classical and modern literature, the ancient and modern books in the Royal Library are represented as engaging each other in a pitched battle. The moderns are defeated with great slaughter; but Milton and Shakspeare, indignant at the depreciators of their great masters, take no part in the fray. A change of style occurs about the middle of the satire, and thence to the end the Homeric manner is parodied very amusingly.

The *Anti-Jacobin*, or *Weekly Examiner*, established in 1797 by Canning and his friends, might be classed, according to its form, under the head of Journalism; but since its professed object was to chastise by ridicule, and so render harmless, the Jacobinical root-and-branch aspirations of that portion of the press which had adopted the new French principles, it is properly classed among works of satire and wit. In performing this self-assigned function, the conductors of the *Anti-Jacobin* did not mince matters; their language was as violent and abusive as that of their opponents, their accusations as sweeping, and their scrupulosity of assertion not much superior. But the vigour and wit with which they employed the weapons of sarcasm, irony, and parody, gave them a decided advantage, and have gained for the *Anti-Jacobin* a permanent place in our libraries. Parody was used by

Canning in the sonnet upon Mrs. Brownrigg, imitated from Southey's lines on Marten the regicide, and in the famous ballad of the *Needy Knife-Grinder*, suggested by Southey's sapphics. The prose portion of the paper contained each week three paragraphs headed "Lies," "Misrepresentations," "Mistakes," in which the corresponding delinquencies of the Jacobin press during the preceding week were examined and castigated. In the second volume Canning introduced the prose drama of *The Rovers, or The Double Arrangement*, a capital burlesque on Kotzebue's plays, which were then the rage in England. The virtuous sentiments and loose practice of Kotzebue's heroes and heroines are amusingly exhibited in Matilda and her lover. Matilda's "A thought strikes me; let us swear eternal friendship," is exquisite in its absurdity.

Before speaking of works of Humour, it is necessary, in order not to confound them with works of Satire, to define the term, humour, with some strictness. Humour is a peculiar way of regarding persons, actions, and things, in conformity to the peculiar character of the humorist. It is to be carefully distinguished from wit, which is the quick apprehension of relations between ideas apparently dissimilar — such relations being generally verbal rather than real. Humour looks beneath the surface; it does not stay among the familiar outsides and semblances of things; it seizes upon strange, out-of-the-way relations between ideas, which are real rather than verbal. In this it resembles imagination; and the humorist must indeed possess this fusing and reuniting faculty in a high degree; but the difference is, that the relations between ideas which his turn of mind leads him to perceive are mostly *odd, strange*, relations, the exhibition of which, while it makes us thoughtful, because the relations are real, not verbal merely, awakens also our sense of the ludicrous. We may take as an illustration the strange train of ideas in which

Hamlet indulges in the scene with the grave-diggers, when he "traces in imagination the noble dust of Alexander, until he finds it stopping a bung-hole." Again, the property which has been assigned to humour of looking beneath the surface, involves the power of detecting empty pretension and hypocrisy, however carefully they may be disguised. Under all the trappings and habiliments with which he seeks to veil his littleness, the humorist still detects the insignificant creature, *man*; and delights, by homely apologue or humiliating comparison, to hold up a mirror in which he may see himself as he is. This is the direction in which the humorist approaches very near to the satirist, the distinction being that the latter has, while the former has not, a definite moral purpose, genuine or assumed, in lashing and exposing the weaknesses of mankind. Humour is exhibitive, satire didactic. In humour, as Coleridge says, there is a universalising property; satire, on the contrary, seizes upon different classes of men, and tends always to personality. It seems never to have quite lost the memory of the scenes amid which it had its origin — of the Fescennine licence — the unlimited freedom of heaping abuse and ridicule upon individuals, which were allowed to the Eleusinian mystics upon their return from the solemn ceremonies of initiation.

Sterne, the author of *Tristram Shandy* and the *Sentimental Journey*, is essentially and above all things a humorist. *Tristram Shandy* is ostensibly a fictitious narrative, but it is really a pure work of humour, the narrative being destitute of plot, and the incidents only serving to bring out the humorous traits and notions of the different characters (Mr. Shandy, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, &c.) and to give occasion to humorous rhapsodies on the part of the author. In *Tristram Shandy* the humour tends to the side of satire; while in the *Sentimental Journey* it tends to the side of sentiment and pathos. The well-known episode on the dead donkey, and the story

of the captive, exhibit this phase of Sterne's humour. We extract the former: —

"The mourner was sitting upon a stone bench at the door, with an ass's pannel and its bridle on one side, which he took up from time to time, then laid them down, looked at them, and shook his head. He then took his crust of bread out of his wallet again, as if to eat it, held it some time in his hand, then laid it upon the bit of his ass's bridle, looked wistfully at the little arrangement he had made, and then gave a sigh. The simplicity of his grief drew numbers about him, and La Fleur among the rest, whilst the horses were getting ready; as I continued sitting in the post-chaise, I could see and hear over their heads.

"He said he had come last from Spain, where he had been from the farthest borders of Franconia; and had got so far on his return home when his ass died. Everyone seemed desirous to know what business could have taken so old and poor a man so far a journey from his own home. It had pleased Heaven, he said, to bless him with three sons, the finest lads in all Germany; but having in one week lost two of the eldest of them by the small-pox, and the youngest falling ill of the same distemper, he was afraid of being bereft of them all, and made a vow, if Heaven would not take him from him also, he would go, in gratitude, to St. Iago in Spain. When the mourner got thus far on his story, he stopped to pay nature his tribute, and wept bitterly. He said, Heaven had accepted the conditions, and that he had set out from his cottage with this poor creature, who had been a patient partner of his journey; that it had ate the same bread with him all the way, and was unto him as a friend.

"Everybody who stood about heard the poor fellow with concern; La Fleur offered him money. The mourner said he did not want it; it was not the value of the ass, but the loss of him. The ass, he said, he was assured loved him; and upon this, he told them a long story of a mischance upon their passage over the Pyrenean mountains, which had separated them from each other three days; during which time the ass had sought him as much as he had sought the ass; and that they had scarce either ate or drunk till they met. 'Thou hast one comfort, at least,' said I, 'in the loss of thy poor beast: I'm sure thou hast been a merciful master to

him.' 'Alas!' said the mourner, 'I thought so when he was alive; but now that he is dead I think otherwise; I fear the weight of myself and my afflictions together have been too much for him; they have shortened the poor creature's days, and I fear I have them to answer for.' 'Shame on the world!' said I to myself. 'Did we but love each other as this poor soul loved his ass, 't would be something.'"

Among writings of pure wit, the works of Sidney Smith stand unequalled. What brilliancy, what liveliness, what bright intelligence, in his *Letters to Archdeacon Singleton*, or his *Thoughts on American Repudiation!* Under this head may also be mentioned the ironical *jeu d'esprit* by Archbishop Whately, entitled *Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Bonaparte.*

3. Oratory, Journalism, Pamphleteering.

Oratory is of three kinds: that of the pulpit, that of the bar, and that of the public assembly, or of the tribune, to use a convenient French term.

When the oratory of the pulpit addresses itself to questions purely religious and moral, or when it interprets Scripture, it is called Homiletics, or preaching, and must be considered in connection with theology. When it deals with political questions, or celebrates the virtues of individuals, it becomes in the strict sense a branch of oratory. The political sermon and the funeral oration are as much a part of eloquence as the advocate's address, or the speech from the hustings; — the chief difference lying in the conditions of delivery, which give to the pulpit orator leisure for careful preparation, and preclude the possibility of reply.

In this kind of oratory the great names which France can boast of immediately occur to us; — Boucher and the preachers of the League, Bossuet, Bourdalone, and

Massillon. In English literature we have little that requires notice but the political sermons and funeral orations of Jeremy Taylor, and some sermons by South. Taylor's sermon at the funeral of Archbishop Bramhall has some fine passages; yet his success in this kind of composition was on the whole inconsiderable.

The oratory of the bar differs from that of the pulpit and the tribune in that the conditions under which it exists oblige it ordinarily to take for its guiding and animating lights, not general moral principles, but legal maxims and decisions; and, even in cases where an appeal to general principles is admissible, to give them always a special and immediate application. A certain relative inferiority hence attaches to this kind of eloquence. It is not ordinarily that of the convinced mind, communicating its convictions to others for some high purpose, whether that be the exhibition of pure truth or the maintenance of the public welfare, or at lowest the defence of party principles, but that of the advocate whose single aim it is to make out his case, and advance the interests of his client. Exceptional cases, however, are not uncommon — as on the trials of eminent public men or notorious criminals, — in which the advocate appears as the vindicator of human or divine justice, and discharges a function of great dignity. Of this nature are the orations of Cicero against Verres and Catiline, and, among ourselves, the speeches of Burke on the impeachment of Warren Hastings. But the instances are more common in which lawyers in public trials have been the instruments of royal suspicion or party hate. Never was eloquence more shamefully prostituted than by Coke in his prosecution of Raleigh, or by Bacon when he appeared against his benefactor Essex.

The oratory of the public assembly is illustrated in English literature by a long roll of historic names, some of which are not unlikely to rival in perpetuity of renown the names of the great orators of antiquity. Far above all

others rises the eloquence of Burke. The following extract from his *Speech at Bristol previous to the Election* in 1780, refers to the demoralising effects of the penal laws against the Catholics: —

"In this situation men not only shrink from the frowns of a stern magistrate, but they are obliged to fly from their very species. The seeds of destruction are sown in civil intercourse, in social habitudes. The blood of wholesome kindred is infected. Their tables and beds are surrounded with snares. All the means given by Providence to make life safe and comfortable are perverted into instruments of terror and torment. This species of universal subserviency, that makes the very servant who waits behind your chair the arbiter of your life and fortune, has such a tendency to degrade and abase mankind, and to deprive them of that assured and liberal state of mind, which alone can make us what we ought to be, that I vow to God I would sooner bring myself to put a man to immediate death for opinions I disliked, and so to get rid of the man and his opinions at once, than to fret him with a feverish being, tainted with the jail distemper of a contagious servitude, to keep him above ground an animated mass of putrefaction, corrupted himself and corrupting all about him."

The eulogium upon Sir George Savile, a little farther on, has a terse and classic turn of expression, which our language, from its want of inflections, has rarely attained to: —

"I hope that few things which have a tendency to bless or to adorn life have wholly escaped my observation in my passage through it. I have sought the acquaintance of that gentleman, and have seen him in all situations. He is a true genius, with an understanding vigorous, and acute, and refined, and distinguishing even to excess; and illuminated with a most unbounded, peculiar, and original cast of imagination. With these he possesses many external and instrumental advantages; and he makes use of them all. His fortune is among the largest; a fortune which, wholly unencumbered as it is with one single charge from luxury, vanity, or excess, sinks under the benevolence of its dispenser. This private benevolence, expanding itself into patriotism, renders his whole being the estate of the public, in which he has not

reserved a *peculium* for himself of profit, diversion, or relaxation. During the session, the first in and the last out of the House of Commons, he passes from the senate to the camp; and seldom seeing the seat of his ancestors, he is always in the senate to serve his country, or in the field to defend it."

The function of the journalist so far resembles that of the orator, that his object also is to produce immediate conviction or persuasion, with a view to action. But he speaks to his audience through the broad sheet, not by word of mouth. The extensive use of this mode of address in modern times is attributable, partly to the populousness and geographical extent of modern communities, partly to the increased diffusion of a certain grade of culture, partly also to the invention of a variety of mechanical contrivances, met by corresponding social arrangements, by which the journalist is enabled to address his readers at *regular* and *brief* intervals. At Athens the sovereign people all resided within easy reach of the Pnyx or the Dionysiac theatre, so that the orators who led them could reach them through their ears, and were not compelled, like our journalists, to appeal to citizens living at a distance through the eye. It must be noted that the journalist and the circulator of news, though the two offices are usually combined in practice, have distinct functions in theory. Newspapers originated, as the name itself implies, in the attempt to discharge the humbler office, that of collecting and disseminating news. But as the demand for correct and frequent intelligence increased, and the means of supplying it were also multiplied, the conductors of newspapers naturally seized the opportunity thus afforded them of accompanying their news with their own comments and explanations. It is from the power and social influence which the able use of these opportunities has secured to it that the newspaper press has received the name of the *Fourth Estate*, and that journalism has almost risen to the dignity

of a profession. At the present day the journalist sometimes discards the business of a circulator of news altogether — as in the instance of the 'Saturday Review.' The newspaper, as originally understood, is now represented only by government and mercantile gazettes, and similar publications.

The pamphlet, whether its ends be political or politico-religious, is equivalent to an elaborate speech, which by means of the printing press obtains a diffusion immeasurably exceeding that which oral delivery can accomplish. In a country where the press is free, this indirect kind of oratory is sure to be largely resorted to, especially in times of political agitation; and many an eager political theorist, whom compulsory silence would have turned into a conspirator, has relieved his excitement by writing, and proved innocuous as a pamphleteer. The civil war of the 17th century, the reign of Anne, and the fifty years terminating in 1835, are the periods at which pamphleteering has most flourished amongst us. We will give a specimen from a work of each period. Few pamphlets composed in the first have much literary value, except the politico-religious tracts of Milton. The following extract forms a portion of his eulogy upon the Long Parliament in the *Apology for Smectymnuus*:—

"With such a majesty had their wisdom begirt itself, that whereas others had levied war to subdue a nation that sought for peace, they sitting here in peace could so many miles extend the force of their single words as to overawe the dissolute stoutness of an armed power, secretly stirred up and almost hired against them. And having by a solemn protestation vowed themselves and the kingdom anew to God and his service, and by a prudent foresight above what their fathers thought on, prevented the dissolution and frustration of their designs by an untimely breaking up; notwithstanding all the treasonous plots against them, all the rumours either of rebellion or invasion, they have not been yet

brought to change their constant resolution, ever to think fearlessly of their own safeties, and hopefully of the commonwealth; which hath gained them such an admiration from all good men that now they hear it as their ordinary surname to be saluted the fathers of their country, and sit as gods among daily petitions and public thanks flowing in upon them. Which doth so little yet exalt them in their own thoughts, that with all gentle affability and courteous acceptance, they both receive and return that tribute of thanks which is tendered them; testifying their zeal and desire to spend themselves as it were piecemeal upon the grievances and wrongs of their distressed nation; insomuch that the meanest artisans and labourers, at other times also women, and often the younger sort of servants, assembling with their complaints, and that sometimes in a less humble guise than for petitioners, have come with confidence that neither their meanness would be rejected, nor their simplicity contemned, nor yet their urgency distasted, either by the dignity, wisdom, or moderation of that supreme senate; nor did they depart unsatisfied."

The next extract is from Swift's *Conduct of the Allies*, a pamphlet published in 1712. By the 'reigning favourites' are meant Godolphin and the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. The war of the Spanish succession was now practically over; the ministry which carried it on had been dismissed; and Swift's object was to reconcile men's minds to the peace which the new ministry were endeavouring to negotiate, by enlarging on the wasteful and corrupt manner in which the nation had been plunged in debt in order to carry on a war which benefited only the allies, the English general and the capitalists: —

"But when the war was thus begun, there soon fell in other incidents here at home, which made the continuance of it necessary for those who were the chief advisers. The Whigs were at that time out of all credit or consideration: the reigning favourites had always carried what was called the Tory principle, at least as high as our constitution could bear; and most others in great employments were wholly in the church interest. These last, among whom several were persons of the greatest merit, quality, and consequence, were not able to endure the many instances of pride,

insolence, avarice, and ambition, which those favourites began so early to discover, nor to see them presuming to be the sole dispensers of the royal favour. However, their opposition was to no purpose; they wrestled with too great a power, and were soon crushed under it. For those in possession, finding they could never be quiet in their usurpations while others had any credit who were at least upon an equal foot of merit, began to make overtures to the discarded Whigs, who would be content with any terms of accommodation. Thus commenced this *Solemn League and Covenant*, which hath ever since been cultivated with so much zeal and application. The great traders in money were wholly devoted to the Whigs, who had first raised them. The army, the court, and the treasury, continued under the old despotic administration: the Whigs were received into employment, left to manage the parliament, cry down the landed interest, and worry the church. Meantime our allies, who were not ignorant that all this artificial structure had no true foundation in the hearts of the people, resolved to make their best use of it, as long as it should last. And the General's credit being raised to a great height at home by our success in Flanders, the Dutch began their gradual impositions, lessening their quotas, breaking their stipulations, garrisoning the towns we took for them, without supplying their troops; with many other infringements. All which we were forced to submit to, because the General was *made easy*; because the moneyed men at home were fond of the war; because the Whigs were not yet firmly settled; and because that exorbitant degree of power, which was built upon a supposed necessity of employing particular persons, would go off in a peace. It is needless to add that the emperor and other princes followed the example of the Dutch, and succeeded as well for the same reasons."

Among the innumerable tracts and pamphlets produced in the third period, the following passage is selected almost at random; it is from a pamphlet written by Lord Byron in 1821, in the form of a letter to a friend in England, examining the Rev. W. L. Bowles's strictures on the life and writings of Pope. The passage is interesting, as embodying one great poet's deliberate estimate of another: —

"Of Pope I have expressed my opinion elsewhere, as also of the effects which the present attempts at poetry have had upon our literature. If any great national or natural convulsion could or should overwhelm your country in such sort as to sweep Great Britain from the kingdoms of the earth, and leave only that — after all, the most living of human things — a *dead language*, to be studied and read, and imitated by the wise of future and far generations, upon foreign shores; if your literature should become the learning of mankind, divested of party cabals, temporary fashions, and national pride and prejudice, an Englishman, anxious that the posterity of strangers should know that there had been such a thing as a British epic and tragedy, might wish for the preservation of Shakspeare and Milton; but the surviving world would snatch Pope from the wreck, and let the rest sink with the people. He is the only poet that never shocks; the only poet whose *faultlessness* has been made his reproach. Cast your eye over his productions; consider their extent, and contemplate their variety — pastoral, passion, mock-heroic, translation, satire, ethics — all excellent, and often perfect."

4. History: — Contemporary and Retrospective.

Under this general heading we include true narratives of all kinds. For the faithful record of any actual human experience whatever may be regarded as a work subsidiary to, and promotive of, the end of History proper; which is, the representation of the evolution, either of the general life of mankind (universal history), or of the life of some one nation in particular. Biography of every description is thus included among the departments subsidiary to history. Indeed it has been proved by some late brilliant examples — in the case of Macaulay's England for instance — that the historian who rightly understands his business can glean nearly as much material suitable for his purpose from the lives of private persons as from those of princes, statesmen, or generals. Accounts of voyages and travels are also, though more remotely, subsidiary to history. The observations of an intelligent traveller in

civilised countries are obviously of the highest value to the historian. Arthur Young's *Travels in France* before the Revolution and Laing's *Notes of a Traveller* are cases in point. And even the descriptions given by the first explorers of wild uninhabited regions are subsidiary to the history of later generations. To the historian of America, the narrative of Raleigh's blind and struggling progress along the swampy coasts of North Carolina, while engaged in laying the foundations of the colony of Virginia, cannot fail to be of the highest use and interest. So when the history of the Australian colonies comes to be written, the works of Mitchell, Sturt, Grey, Leichhardt, and other hardy explorers, will assuredly furnish a large portion of the matter of its introductory chapters.

History proper is of two kinds: 1, contemporary; 2, retrospective or reflective. A third kind — philosophical history — has been added by some German metaphysicians.* By this is meant, the scientific exhibition of the manner in which the state of human society in any given generation inevitably causes, through the operation of physical laws, the state of society found in the next generation. As, however, the life of a nation or of the race is evolved by human actions, and it has not yet been proved, however confidently asserted, by these philosophers, that such actions are subject to physical necessity—in other words, that the human will is not free — those who believe in the opposite doctrines of responsibility and free-will, will not be disposed to admit the possibility of history being correctly written upon such a hypothesis.

1. Under the description of contemporary history are comprised, in English literature, many works which from the literary point of view are nearly worthless, together with a few which are of rare excellence. The former character applies to the contemporary portions of our old English chronicles, Fabyan, Hall, Grafton, Holinshed,

* See Hegel's *Philosophie der Geschichte.*

Stowe, &c. Ludlow's and Whitlocke's *Memoirs*, relating to the civil war of Charles I.'s time, though much superior to these, are flat in style and dull through deficiency of descriptive power. Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion* is the most perfect contemporary history that we possess; next to it may be named Burnet's *History of His Own Times*, and Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II.*

Clarendon's history is a work with which the student of our literature should make himself familiar. It is indeed very long, but the theme is one so deeply interesting, and the revolution which it records has so decisively influenced the whole course of our history down to the present day, that he may be excused for spending some time over it. There are many digressions too — Clarendon is partial to them — which if necessary may be omitted. Of course the book is not impartial, nor entirely trustworthy. For not only was the author a keen partisan on the royalist side; — he was also a lawyer, and had a legal turn of mind; and was thence disqualified to a certain degree from weighing the conduct and aims of the different parties in even scales. The Puritans on the one hand, and the Catholics on the other, were pursuing objects which the law of the land, in establishing the Church of England, had condemned; and this is reason enough with Clarendon for branding those objects as bad, and their pursuit as criminal. For instance, he thus speaks of the infamous sentence passed on Prynne and his fellow-sufferers, referred to above at p. 109 : —

" These three persons (Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton) having been, for several follies and libelling humours, first gently reprehended, and after, for their incorrigibleness, more severely censured and imprisoned, found some means in prison of correspondence, which was not before known to be between them; and to combine themselves in a more pestilent and seditious libel than they had ever before vented; in which the honour of the

king, queen, counsellors, and bishops was with equal license blasted and traduced; which was faithfully dispersed by their proselytes in the city. The authors were quickly and easily known, and had indeed too much ingenuity to deny it, and were thereupon brought together to the Star-chamber, *ore tenus*, where they behaved themselves with marvellous insolence, with full confidence demanding that 'the bishops who sat in the court,' (being only the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London) 'might not be present, because they were their enemies, and so parties;' which, how scandalous and ridiculous soever it seemed then there, was good logic and good law two years after in Scotland, and served to banish the bishops of that kingdom both from the council table and the assembly. Upon a very patient and solemn hearing, in as full a court as ever I saw in that place, without any difference in opinion or dissenting voice, they were all three censured as scandalous, seditious, and infamous persons, 'to lose their ears in the pillory, and to be imprisoned in several gaols during the king's pleasure;' all which was executed with rigour and severity enough."

But whatever defects, whether of matter or manner, may be alleged against this work, the style is so attractive, —has such an equable, easy, and dignified flow,—that it can never cease to be popular. Perhaps Clarendon's greatest merit is his skill in character-drawing. Take for example the character of Hampden: —

"He was a gentleman of a good family in Buckinghamshire, and born to a fair fortune, and of a most civil and affable deportment. In his entrance into the world he indulged to himself all the license in sports, and exercises, and company, which was used by men of the most jolly conversation. Afterwards, he retired to a more reserved and melancholy society, yet preserving his own natural cheerfulness and vivacity, and, above all, a flowing courtesy to all men; though they who conversed nearly with him found him growing into a dislike of the ecclesiastical government of the church, yet most believed it rather a dislike of some churchmen, and of some introducements of theirs, which he apprehended might disquiet the public peace. He was rather of reputation in his own country than of public discourse or fame

in the kingdom, before the business of ship-money; but then he grew the argument of all tongues, every man inquiring who and what he was that durst, at his own charge, support the liberty and property of the kingdom, and rescue his country, as he thought, from being made a prey to the court. His carriage throughout this agitation was with that rare temper and modesty, that they who watched him narrowly to find some advantage against his person, to make him less resolute in his cause, were compelled to give him a just testimony. And the judgement that was given against him infinitely more advanced him than the service for which it was given. When this parliament began (being returned knight of the shire for the county where he lived), the eyes of all men were fixed on him as their *patriæ pater*, and the pilot that must steer the vessel through the tempests and rocks which threatened it. And I am persuaded his power and interest at that time was greater to do good or hurt than any man's in the kingdom, or than any man in his rank hath had in any time; for his reputation of honesty was universal, and his affections seemed so publicly guided that no corrupt or private ends could bias them.

* * * * * *

"After he was among those members accused by the king of high treason, he was much altered; his nature and carriage seeming much fiercer than it did before. And, without question, when he first drew his sword he threw away the scabbard; for he passionately opposed the overture made by the king for a treaty from Nottingham, and as eminently, any expedients that might have produced any accommodations in this that was at Oxford; and was principally relied on to prevent any infusions which might be made into the Earl of Essex towards peace, or to render them ineffectual if they were made; and was indeed much more relied on by that party than the general himself. In the first entrance into the troubles he undertook the command of a regiment of foot, and performed the duty of a colonel on all occasions most punctually. He was very temperate in diet, and a supreme governor over all his passions and affections, and had thereby a great power over other men's. He was of an industry and vigilance not to be tired out or wearied by the most laborious; and of parts not to be imposed upon by the most subtle or sharp; and of a

personal courage equal to his best parts: so that he was an enemy not to be wished wherever he might have been made a friend; and as much to be apprehended where he was so as any man could deserve to be. And therefore his death was no less pleasing to the one party than it was condoled in the other. In a word, what was said of Cinna might well be applied to him — 'He had a head to contrive, and a tongue to persuade, and a hand to execute any mischief.' His death, therefore, seemed to be a great deliverance to the nation."

Burnet's *Own Times* is a work that is full of inaccuracies, and does not rise above the level of a plain conversational style; it however throws much valuable light on the history of civil transactions in England and Scotland during the latter half of the seventeenth century. This writer also is graphic, and probably faithful, in his delineations of character.

Horace Walpole, son of the Whig statesman, Sir Robert Walpole, had a near view during his long life of the secret machinery by which the state policy of Britain was set in motion; and we have the results of his observation in his *Memoirs* above-mentioned, as well as in the lively and lengthy series of his *Letters*. But Horace, though polished and keen, is by no means a genial writer; selfish himself, he did not much believe in human disinterestedness; and, without the large intellectual grasp of Gibbon, he was destitute of those strong human sympathies and antipathies, which impart a certain interest to the works of much inferior men.

2. Retrospective history may be either legendary or evidential; by which is meant history, the statements of which on matters of fact rest on probable moral evidence. The legendary history relates events supposed to occur at distant periods, the evidence for which is mere popular tradition. In such a history, no event, or connection of events — no names or genealogies — can be accepted as accurately corresponding to reality. Yet, as there are

usually certain grains of historic truth deducible from even the most imaginative of these histories, and as the writers at any rate suppose themselves to be relators of fact not fiction, the reader must not confound this class of works with fictitious narratives. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britonum* is a pure legendary history. All the old English chroniclers begin their histories just as Livy does, with legendary recitals, of which Geoffrey's work is the principal source. In most of them a portion of retrospective history succeeds, compiled from the writings of their predecessors. This is followed by the narrative of contemporary events, which is usually the only portion of such works that has any value.

Retrospective histories of the evidential class proceed upon the same principles, whether they treat of ancient or of modern civilisation. The same critical rules are appealed to in each case for the purpose of testing the credibility of the witnesses, ascertaining the dates, or other circumstances connected with the composition of documents — in short, for accomplishing the great end of this kind of historical writing, which is to paint a past age as it really was. We proceed to notice the chief works of this class in English literature, proceeding from ancient to modern history.

The *History of the World*, by Raleigh, professes to describe the course of events in the chief countries of the ancient world, from the creation to the fall of the Macedonian kingdom in 168 B.C. But, to say nothing of the complete sifting and intercomparison which the original authors themselves have undergone in the interim — so much subsidiary and collateral information of all kinds has been collected since the time of Raleigh, that his work, as a whole, has become almost worthless. The most remarkable passages are those in which the chivalrous old campaigner illustrates the details of Macedonian or Roman battles, by referring to scenes in his own varied and

turbulent life. Now and then the style rises to a very clear and noble strain, as in the following sentences, with which the work concludes: —

"By this, which we have already set down, is seen the beginning and end of the three first monarchies of the world, whereof the founders and erectors thought that they could never have ended. That of Rome, which made the fourth, was also at this time almost at the highest. We have left it flourishing in the middle of the field, having rooted up or cut down all that kept it from the eyes and admiration of the world; but after some continuance, it shall begin to lose the beauty it had; the storms of ambition shall beat her great boughs and branches one against another, her leaves shall fall off, her limbs wither, and a rabble of barbarous nations enter the field and cut her down.

* * * * * *

"For the rest, if we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition in mortal men, we may add to that which hath been already said, that the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them the actions, but not the ends, of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one, but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life, or hope it; but they follow the counsel of Death upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word, which God, with all the words of His law, promises, or threats doth not infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man, is believed; God, which hath made him and loves him, is always deferred — 'I have considered, saith Solomon, 'all the works that are under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit;' but who believes it till Death tells it us? . . . . O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet*!"

Mr. Mitford was the first Englishman who attempted, in emulation of Gibbon, to write at length the history of Greece. Dr. Thirlwall and Mr. Grote have followed more ably and exhaustively over the same ground; but as we do not propose to comment upon works by living authors, we abstain from the attempt to describe or appreciate their labours.

In Roman history, Hooke, the friend of Pope, was first in the field; and to him succeeded Dr. Ferguson, with his dry book on the Roman Republic.

The vast sweep taken in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* exhibits Gibbon's wonderful capacity, not only for mastering and reproducing the sequence and connection of events through a long and obscure period in the principal countries of Europe and Asia, but also for dealing with what may be called the *statics* of the subject, in those detailed, consistent, and luminous pictures which he draws of the state of society as existing in a particular country at a particular time. The main body of the work commences with the reign of Trajan (A.D 98) and ends with the fall of the Eastern Empire (A.D. 1453); but three supplementary chapters "review the state and revolutions of the Roman city" (to which, it will be remembered, Gibbon had limited his original design) from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. But though it is difficult to speak too highly of the genius displayed in this memorable work, it must be added, that the fidelity of the historical picture which it exhibits is greatly marred by the Sadducean scepticism of the writer. When a Christian bishop or doctor, or a religious king, comes before his field of vision, it is not in Gibbon to be just; he cannot or will not believe that such a man was anything more than a compound of enthusiasm and superstition, in whom morality was always ready to give way to ecclesiastical considerations; and his sneering cavils seem to leave their trail upon the purest virtue, the most exalted heroism, which the times that he writes

of produced for the instruction of mankind. He is in thorough sympathy with no one except Julian the Apostate. It is truly unfortunate that no Englishman has treated of the history of the Church during the first five centuries with ability or knowledge at all comparable to Gibbon's. No Fleury, or Döllinger, or De Broglie, has as yet arisen among ourselves to fill this vacant place in our literature.

Dr. Arnold's unfinished Roman history, based upon that of Niebuhr, extends from the founding of the city to the middle of the second Punic war. Two additional volumes, written at an earlier period but not published till after the author's death, carry on the history of the Roman Commonwealth from the close of the second Punic war to the death of Augustus, with a separate chapter on the reign of Trajan.

Among those who have written the history of England, Scotland, or Ireland, it is impossible to do more than mention a few prominent names.

Sir Thomas More's *History of the Reign of Edward V.* is a youthful and rhetorical production, which, according to Horace Walpole, who, in his *Historic Doubts respecting Richard III.*, has sifted the whole matter very ably, will nowhere stand a critical examination and confrontation with the original authorities. Lord Bacon's *History of Henry VII.*, though composed in a homely style, is a masterly work. Men's motives are deeply probed, and their actions wisely weighed; laws and events affecting the course of trade, the progress of agriculture, and the welfare of particular classes of society, are carefully recorded and examined: truth without disguise seems to be the writer's paramount design; and characters are drawn as by an eye that saw all, and a hand that could paint all. Milton's *History of England* is a mere fragment. Neal's *History of the Puritans*, and another of *New England* by the same author, are both valuable works, because carefully based on documentary and oral evidence. But the

most eminent historians of the seventeenth century belong to the contemporary class.

In the next century, and down to 1850, we can barely mention the names of Rapin, Carte, Lord Hailes, Belsham, and Adolphus. Hume's clear and manly style would have insured to his *History of England* a longer preeminence, had not his indolence allowed inaccuracies and a want of references to deform his work. Robertson's *History of Scotland* is pleasant reading, but uncritical. The work similarly entitled by Sir Walter Scott embraces all the earlier portion of the history, from A.D. 80 to the accession of Mary Queen of Scots, which Robertson had omitted. The most complete and accurate history of England, so far as it extends, which has yet appeared, is that of Dr. Lingard. Unfortunately, it breaks off at the revolution of 1688. Macaulay's volumes commenced to appear in 1848. Moore's *History of Ireland* is a work unworthy of his genius. Lanigan's *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, embracing the period from the conversion of the Irish by St. Patrick to the loss of their national independence in the twelfth century, is a calm, dispassionate, and profoundly learned work.

No very signal success has been achieved by English writers in compiling histories of modern continental states. Knolles' *History of the Turks* must be named under this head; and Coxe's *Memoirs of the House of Austria*, and Russell's *Modern Europe*, and Roscoe's *Lorenzo de Medici*. Here also must be placed Arnold's *Introductory Lectures on Modern History*, which contain several brilliant isolated sketches. One such passage we extract: —

"Ten years afterwards there broke out by far the most alarming danger of universal dominion which had ever threatened Europe. The most military people in Europe became engaged in a war for their very existence. Invasion on the frontiers, civil war and all imaginable horrors raging within — the ordinary relations of life went to wrack, and every Frenchman became a soldier.

It was a multitude numerous as the hosts of Persia, but animated by the courage and skill and energy of the old Romans. One thing alone was wanting, that which Pyrrhus said the Romans wanted to enable them to conquer the world — a general and a ruler like himself. There was wanted a master hand to restore and maintain peace at home, and to concentrate and direct the immense military resources of France against her foreign enemies. And such an one appeared in Napoleon. Pacifying La Vendée, receiving back the emigrants, restoring the church, remodelling the law, personally absolute, yet carefully preserving and maintaining all the great points which the nation had won at the revolution, Napoleon united in himself not only the power but the whole will of France, and that power and will were guided by a genius for war such as Europe had never seen since Cæsar. The effect was absolutely magical. In November 1799 he was made First Consul; he found France humbled by defeats, his Italian conquests lost, his allies invaded, his own frontier threatened. He took the field in May 1800, and in June the whole fortune of the war was changed, and Austria driven out of Lombardy by the victory of Marengo. Still the flood of the tide rose higher and higher, and every successive wave of its advance swept away a kingdom. Earthly state has never reached a prouder pinnacle than when Napoleon, in June 1812, gathered his army at Dresden, and there received the homage of subject kings. And now what was the principal adversary of this tremendous power? by whom was it checked, and resisted, and put down? By none, and by nothing, but the direct and manifest interposition of God! I know of no language so well fitted to describe that victorious advance to Moscow, and the utter humiliation of the retreat, as the language of the prophet with respect to the advance and subsequent destruction of the host of Sennacherib."

Orme, Mill, and Elphinstone, are the chief authorities for the history of India. The first two confine their attention to British India, but Elphinstone's work treats chiefly of the times anterior to European occupation. For the history of the colonial dependencies of European states, Robertson (in his History of America) and Bryan Edwards, author of a history of Jamaica, are the only names of much

importance. Prescott, Bancroft, and other American writers, have ably taken up that portion of the subject which relates to the American continent.

Mr. James and Captain Brenton have written the naval history of Britain. The latter has the advantage in style, the former in accuracy and clearness of arrangement. Sir William Napier's *History of the Peninsular War* is a work of the highest order. We cannot resist the temptation of transcribing one of the many glowing and eloquent passages with which it abounds. It refers to the closing struggle of the battle of Albuera: —

"The conduct of a few brave men soon changed this state of affairs. Colonel Robert Arbuthnot, pushing between the double fire of the mistaken troops, arrested that mischief; while Cole, with the fusiliers, flanked by a battalion of the Lusitanian Legion, under Colonel Hawkshawe, mounted the hill, dispersed the lancers, recovered the captured guns, and appeared on the right of Houghton's brigade exactly as Abercrombie passed it on the left.

"Such a gallant line, issuing from the midst of the smoke, and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy's heavy masses, which were increasing and pressing onwards as to an assured victory: they wavered, hesitated, and then vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavoured to enlarge their front, while a fearful discharge of grape from all their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myers was killed; Cole, and the three colonels, Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshawe, fell wounded; and the fusilier battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships. Suddenly and sternly recovering, they closed with their terrible enemies, and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult by voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the noblest veterans, extricating themselves from the crowded columns, sacrifice their lives to gain time for the mass to bear up on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and, fiercely striving, fire indiscriminately upon friends and foes, while the horsemen, hovering upon their flank, threatened to charge the advancing line. Nothing

could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm, weakened the stability of their order; their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front; their measured tread shook the ground; their murderous volleys swept away the head of every formation; their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries which arose from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as foot by foot, and with a horrid carnage, it was driven by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill. In vain did the French reserves, joining with the struggling multitude, endeavour to sustain the fight; their efforts only increased the irremediable confusion, and the mighty mass, giving way like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the ascent. The rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood, and fifteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill."

Biography: its Divisions; Diaries, Letters.

This branch of literature opens with autobiographies, which, when well executed, constitute its most valuable and interesting portion. We have but little to set by the side of the charming "Mémoires," in innumerable volumes, which form so piquant a portion of the literature of France. Scott's fragment of autobiography, printed at the beginning of the *Life* by Lockhart, is admirable; but, unfortunately, it is only a fragment, and breaks off when the hero has reached his twentieth year. A similar fragment by Southey, though longer, makes less progress, for it terminates at the fifteenth year; nor do we much regret its unfinished state. Gibbon's *Memoirs* are much in the French style and manner, and form, perhaps, the most interesting and best-executed autobiography that we possess. Hume also, and Priestley, have each given us an account of his life and opinions. Baxter's unwieldy *Relliquiæ Baxterianæ*, or *Narrative of the most memorable Passages of his Life and Times*, has been already mentioned (see p. 141).

In Biography exclusive of autobiography, we may distinguish — 1. general compilations, 2. national compilations, 3. class biographies, 4. personal biographies. Of the first kind, it is to our reproach that until the last few years we have had no specimen deserving of mention. To the *Biographie Universelle* and the *Conversations-Lexicon*, we had for a long time nothing to oppose but the insignificant compilations of Aikin, Grainger, and Gorton. Alexander Chalmers was the first to bring out a biographical dictionary of some pretension, but even in this the omissions are numerous and important. In our own day, two enterprising publishers, Messrs. Knight and Mackenzie, have done, and are doing, much to supply the deficiency — Mr. Knight by the biographical portion of his English Cyclopædia — Mr. Mackenzie by his Imperial Dictionary of Biography, now in course of publication at Glasgow.

2. Of the second kind, we have the *Biographia Britannica*, a work of great research, though with many serious omissions. The original edition embraced the entire alphabet; but its defects were so glaring as to determine Dr. Kippis and others to undertake a re-issue of the work upon an enlarged scale; the new edition, however, was never carried farther than the commencement of the letter F. Fuller's *Worthies of England*, noticed at page 141, is a work of the same description.

3. Of class biographies — not to mention the Latin works of Leland, Bale, and Pitseus, "De Illustribus Britanniæ Scriptoribus," — the chief examples are, Walton's *Lives of Anglican Divines* (including Hooker, Donne, and Sanderson), Wood's *Athenæ Oxonienses*, which is a collection of short memoirs of Oxford men, Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, and Hartley Coleridge's *Biographia Borealis*, or *Lives of Northern Worthies*. From Johnson's account of Gray we extract a passage strongly characteristic of his peculiar style: —

"The *Bard* appears, at the first view, to be, as Algarotti and others have remarked, an imitation of the prophecy of Nereus. Algarotti thinks it superior to its original; and, if preference depends on the imagery and animation of the two poems, his judgement is right. There is in the *Bard* more force, more thought, and more variety. But to copy is less than to invent; and the copy has been unhappily produced at a wrong time. The fiction of Horace was to the Romans credible; but its revival disgusts us with apparent and unconquerable falsehood. *Incredulus odi.*

"To select a singular event, and swell it to a giant's bulk by fabulous appendages of spectres and predictions, has little difficulty; for he that forsakes the probable may always find the marvellous. And it has little use; we are affected only as we believe; we are improved only as we find something to be imitated or declined. I do not see that the *Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political.

"His stanzas are too long, especially his epodes; the ode is finished before the ear has learned its measures, and consequently before it can receive pleasure from their consonance and recurrence.

"Of the first stanza the abrupt beginning has been celebrated; but technical beauties can give praise only to the inventor. It is in the power of every man to rush abruptly upon his subject that has read the ballad of *Johnny Armstrong* —

'Is there ever a man in all Scotland —'

The initial resemblances, or alliterations, 'ruin, ruthless, helm or hauberk,' are below the grandeur of a poem that endeavours at sublimity."

4. Among personal biographies, Boswell's *Life of Johnson* holds confessedly the first place. Next to it in point of literary value, but of equal if not greater intrinsic interest, comes Lockhart's *Life of Scott.* It must be owned that we English have not done that part of our hero-worship particularly well, which consists in writing good lives of our heroes. Shakspeare's life was never written at all. Toland's and Philips' lives of Milton, and

Noble's memoirs of Cromwell and his family, all fall far beneath their subjects. Ruffhead's *Life of Pope* is utterly contemptible. Dryden and Swift have fared better, having found a competent and zealous biographer in Scott. Southey also gained much credit by his biographies of Wesley and Nelson; and it may be said generally that during the present century we have done much to make up our past deficiencies in this department. Scott's *Life of Napoleon* is rather a history of the revolutionary period than a personal memoir. Moore's *Life and Letters of Lord Byron*, though ably put together, do not atone for the crime which he committed against literature in allowing the poet's autobiography to be destroyed. Between 1840 and 1850 the most noteworthy biographies that appeared were Arnold's *Life* by Stanley, and the *Life, Diary, and Letters of Mr. Wilberforce*, edited by his sons.

Diaries and letters, if published separately, are to be regarded as so much biographical or historical material. The Diary of Burton, a member of the Long Parliament, throws much light on the political history of the time. Those of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, in the reign of Charles II., take a more extensive range; we derive from them much curious information as to the literature, art, manners, and morals of that age. The *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay*, the authoress of *Cecilia*, are somewhat disappointing. We have full details of the private life of the court of George III., at which the lively Frances Burney figured in the capacity of a waiting-woman to the queen; — but what a dismal court it was! what an absence not only of gaiety and brilliancy, but even of ordinary refinement! In collections of Letters, our literature is rather rich. The correspondence of Horace Walpole — that prince of letter-writers — with Sir Horace Mann, the Hon. Seymour Conway and others, the Letters of Cromwell, edited by Mr. Carlyle, and those of Cowper, by Southey, are among the chief contributions

to this branch of literature. Pope rose in this, as in every other intellectual effort, to transcendent excellence; his Letters to Swift and others are the most perfect epistolary models that we possess. Chesterfield's once famous Letters to his Son are fast being forgotten.

Theology: its Divisions.

The general character of English theology, which is of course chiefly of Protestant authorship, stamps it as controversial and occasional. Except works of pure learning, its most vigorous and famous productions have all been either defensive or aggressive. They have also been occasional; that is, they have been designed to suit some immediate purpose, and have sprung out of some special conjuncture of circumstances — differing in this respect from most of the great works of Catholic theologians, at least in later times, which have usually either been the fruit of the accumulated study and meditation of years, or have grown out of systematic courses of lectures.

We may best find a clue through the immense labyrinth of theological literature, by dividing the subject into several branches, and then examining the chief works written by English divines in each branch. These divisions may be thus stated: 1. Doctrinal Theology; 2. Moral Theology; 3. Hermeneutics and Biblical Criticism; 4. Symbolical, 5. Patristic, 6. Rationalizing Theology; 7. Pastoral Theology, or Homiletics; 8. Devotional Theology. To these it will be convenient to add, 9. Polemics, for the purpose of including a large class of works which draw successively upon all storehouses of theological argument to meet the exigencies of controversy, and cannot, therefore, be fitly classed under any one of the preceding heads.

Pure doctrinal discussions have not, on the whole, found much favour with English divines; at least, unless we go

back to the subtle doctor, Duns Scotus, Alexander Hales the Irrefragable, and other great British thinkers of the middle age. An exception, however, must be made to this remark in favour of the sacramental controversy, on which an immense number of tracts and treatises have been written. Upon other doctrinal topics the important books that exist may be soon enumerated. They are — Field's *Book of the Church*, Bull's *Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*, Sherlock's *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, written against the Socinians, Wall on *Infant Baptism*, and Waterland's *Vindication of Christ's Divinity*, in reply to the Arian, Dr. Clarke. Of these works, the first three date from the seventeenth, the last two from the eighteenth century. Dr. Richard Field was a favourite with James I., who used to say of him, "Truly this is a *field* which the Lord hath blessed." In his *Book of the Church*, written in reply to Stapleton and other Catholic writers, after laying down from Scripture and the Fathers the notes of the true Church, he endeavoured to show that these notes had been obliterated from the Roman communion, and were all to be found in the Anglican. The discussion is mainly doctrinal, and turns upon the interpretation of the terms unity, indefectibility, sanctity, &c., in which the doctrinal definition of the Church was expressed alike by the High Church Anglicans and their opponents.

Bishop Bull's famous *Defensio* was primarily intended as a reply to Petavius, the learned author of the *Rationarium Temporum*, who had remarked that the language held by the Fathers of the early Church, prior to the Council of Nice, respecting the divinity of the Son, was often loose, ambiguous, and even, if the literal meaning of the words were pressed, heterodox.* This statement had been eagerly seized and made the most of by Arian and Soci-

* With reference to these Fathers, the student should bear in mind the words addressed by St. Augustine to Theodore the Pelagian; "Vobis nondum litigantibus, *securius* loquebantur."

nian controversialists. In opposition both to them and to Petavius, Bull maintains in this work the perfect orthodoxy, not only of the sentiments, but of the language of the Anti-Nicene Fathers. In doing so, Mr. Hallam considers that he is not always candid or convincing. Bull also wrote against the Calvinists a treatise on Justification — *Harmonia Apostolica* — in which he reconciles the texts from St. Paul and St. James on that doctrine.

Sherlock's *Vindication* is not a work of very high ability, and it has been said that he lays himself open in it to the imputation of Tritheism. Waterland's book against Arianism, on the other hand, is a very masterly production, and extinguished that opinion in England. Waterland, who died in 1740, was the last great patristical scholar among Anglican divines.* But while he makes what use he can of the appeal to ancient testimonies, the influence exerted by Locke's *Essay* on all subsequent thinkers may be traced in the closer logic and more systematic argumentation with which Waterland — as compared to the writers of the seventeenth century — deals with the reasonings of Clarke. Wall's treatise on *Infant Baptism* (1705) is a very fair and temperate as well as learned work, the object of which is, first, to prove what was the practice of the early Church with reference to baptism during the first four centuries, and then to urge upon the Baptists, or — as he calls them — Antipædo-Baptists, various considerations touching the evils of disunion, and the ease with which they might, if so disposed, rejoin the Anglican communion.

Moral Theology may be generally described as the exhibition of moral science from the religious point of view, and under theological conditions. Casuistry, one of its most important developements, is the application of theology to the solution of difficult questions in morals.

* See Dowling's *Introduction to the Study of Ecclesiastical History.*

Under this head, Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium* (which he thought the best, but most people regard as the worst, of his works), Perkins' *Cases of Conscience*, Sanderson's treatise *De Juramento*, and Forbes' *Theologia Moralis*, are almost the only works that can be named, and none of them is of great celebrity.

In Hermeneutics and Biblical criticism, much greater things have been effected. Here we have to name Walton's *Polyglott*, consisting of synoptical versions of the Bible in nine languages, Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ* and *Harmony of the Four Gospels*, in which the writer's profound knowledge of the rabbinical literature enabled him to throw a flood of light on the various Jewish usages, rites, and prevailing ideas current in Palestine about the time of the Christian era, and referred to in the New Testament, as well as upon obscure points in the topography of the sacred text. Matthew Pool's *Synopsis Criticorum* is an immense compilation of the principal commentaries on the New Testament. In his bulky *Paraphrase and Annotations on the New Testament*, Hammond appears to be almost overpowered by the fullness and extent of his learning, and unable to wield and master it with the same readiness displayed by some of his contemporaries. Leighton's *Commentary on St. Peter* is extolled by Coleridge with an unmeasured laudation, to which neither its learning nor its ability appear sufficiently to entitle it.

Symbolical Theology treats of the *Symbola* or confessional formularies of different religious denominations. Moehler's *Symbolik* will immediately occur to the reader as a classic in this branch of divinity. The chief Anglican works of this nature are, Pearson's *Exposition of the Apostles' Creed* (1659), and Burnet's work on the Thirty-nine Articles.

But it was in Patristic divinity — that branch which examines, compares, and arranges the testimonies borne

by the Fathers and Councils of the early Christian centuries, and more especially in Patristic learning, by which we chiefly mean the task of editing the works of the Fathers — that the Anglican divines gained their greatest distinctions. In this wide field all that can be done here — and even that may be of some use — is to indicate a few of the most important works. We may name, for instance, Fell's edition of Cyprian, and Bishop Potter's edition of Clemens Alexandrinus (a standard work, still unsuperseded), and Pearson's *Vindiciæ Epistolarum S. Ignatii* and *Annales Cyprianici*, and Beveridge's *Pandectæ Canonum SS. Apostolorum*, a book of immense learning, and Dodwell's *Dissertations* on SS. Cyprian and Irenæus. In ecclesiastical history and antiquities we have Usher's *Annales*, Cave's *Primitive Christianity* (1673) and *Historia Literaria* of ecclesiastical writers from the Christian era to the fourteenth century, and, above all, Bingham's *Origines Ecclesiasticæ, or Antiquities of the Christian Church* (1708-1722), a work of great research and eminent usefulness. In many of these books there is a controversial element, but in none of them does the writer propose to himself as his main object the establishment of a thesis or the refutation of an opponent; they are not, therefore, to be classed among polemics.

The seventeenth century is the great time for the Patristic writers. The rationalizing divines date, for the most part, from the eighteenth.* The former appealed to antiquity and authority in the discussion of disputed questions, the latter to reason and common sense. Stillingfleet, in his *Origines Sacræ, or a Rational Account of the Grounds of Christian Faith* (1663) directed against Hobbes and the atheists, and again in his *Rational Account of the Grounds of Protestant Religion* (1681), against the Catholics, took up the new line of controversy, and may

* See above, p. 201.

be regarded as individually anticipating the *seculum rationalisticum*. Leslie's *Short Method with the Deists* (1694), Butler's *Analogy*, Warburton's *Divine Legation* (1743), Berkeley's *Alciphron* — all of which formed portions of the great debate on Deism, — together with Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospels*, and Paley's *Evidences*, the materials for which he took from Lardner, are the chief remaining works to be cited under this head.

In Pastoral Theology, or Homiletics, the number of published volumes of sermons almost defies computation. Among the principal names are — in the seventeenth century, Donne, Andrews, Bramhall, Taylor, Cosin, Hammond, Beveridge, South, and Tillotson;—in the eighteenth, Butler, Clarke, Wesley, and Whitfield;—in the nineteenth, Robert Hall, Rowland Hill, Chalmers, Arnold, Hare, &c.

In Devotional Theology, though the list is, on the whole, a meagre one, some remarkable books have to be named. Such are William Law's *Serious Call to a Holy Life*, the book which made so great an impression on Johnson; Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest* and *Call to the Unconverted*, *The Whole Duty of Man*, a work of unknown authorship, but precious in the sight of our forefathers a hundred and fifty years ago, and spoken of in that sense in the *Spectator*; lastly, Taylor's moving and eloquent treatises *Of Holy Living* and *Of Holy Dying*. An extract from the latter will enable the reader to form some idea of Taylor's rich and gorgeous style, of the power of his imagination, and the general fulness of his mind. It is upon the shortness of life, and the multitudinous warnings with which it teems, all telling us to prepare to die: —

"All the succession of time, all the changes in nature, all the varieties of light and darkness, the thousand thousands of accidents in the world, and every contingency to every man and to every creature, doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see how the old sexton, Time, throws up the earth, and digs a grave

where we must lay our sins or our sorrows, and sow our bodies, till they rise again in a fair or an intolerable eternity. Every revolution which the sun makes about the world divides between life and death, and death possesses both those portions by the next morrow; and we are dead to all those months which we have already lived, and we shall never live them over again, and still God makes little periods of our age. First we change our world, when we come from the womb to feel the warmth of the sun; then we sleep and enter into the image of death, in which state we are unconcerned in all the changes of the world; and if our mothers or our nurses die, or a wild-boar destroy our vineyards, or our king be sick, we regard it not, but, during that state, are as disinterested as if our eyes were closed with the clay that weeps in the bowels of the earth. At the end of seven years our teeth fall and die before us, representing a formal prologue to the tragedy, and still every seven years it is odds but we shall finish the last scene; and when nature, or chance, or vice, takes our body in pieces, weakening some parts and loosing others, we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funeral, first, in those parts that ministered to vice, and, next, in them that served for ornament; and in a short time, even they that served for necessity become useless and entangled, like the wheels of a broken clock. Baldness is but a dressing to our funerals, the proper ornament of mourning, and of a person entered very far into the regions and possession of death; and we have many more of the same signification—grey hairs, rotten teeth, dim eyes, trembling joints, short breath, stiff limbs, wrinkled skin, short memory, decayed appetite. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion which Death fed on all night when we lay in his lap, and slept in his outer chambers. The very spirits of a man prey upon his daily portion of bread and flesh, and every meal is a rescue from one death, and lays up for another; and while we think a thought we die, and the clock strikes, and reckons on our portion of eternity: we form our words with the breath of our nostrils — we have the less to live upon for every word we speak.

"Thus nature calls us to meditate of death by those things which are the instruments of acting it; and God, by all the variety of His providence, makes us see death everywhere, in all variety of

circumstances, and dressed up for all the fancies and the expectation of every single person. Nature hath given us one harvest every year, but death hath two: and the spring and the autumn send throngs of men and women to charnel-houses; and all the summer long men are recovering from their evils of the spring, till the dog-days come, and then the Sirian star makes the summer deadly; and the fruits of autumn are laid up for all the year's provision, and the man that gathers them eats and surfeits, and dies and needs them not, and himself is laid up for eternity; and he that escapes till winter only stays for another opportunity, which the distempers of that quarter minister to him with great variety. Thus death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves."

Of works of which the entire form and end are controversial, the quantity is immense. Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, with the exception of the first book, which we may range with Hallam among contributions to moral and political science, is a vindication of the liturgy and ceremonies of the Church of England, and of her right to impose them, against the attacks of the Puritans. Laud's *Conference with Fisher*, Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants*, Taylor's *Dissuasive from Popery*, about a dozen treatises, large and small, by Baxter, and Barrow *On the Supremacy*, are some of the most popular productions of this class.

The circumstances in which England and Ireland have been placed since English literature emerged from its rude and semi-barbarous beginnings easily explain the comparative absence of a Catholic theological literature. Most of the existing works are, as might have been expected, controversial. The writings of Parsons and Allen, Stapleton's ponderous tomes, Gother's works, Milner's *End of Controversy*, and some very able tracts by Dr. Doyle, mark — if we exclude works by living authors, the

Wisemans and Newmans of our own day — some of the most important steps and phases of the great controversy. One or two works of great learning might be named, such as Alford's *Annales Britannici*, or of patient research, as Dodd's *Church History*, and Alban Butler's *Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and other principal Saints*, &c.

Philosophy: its Divisions; Political Science; Essays; Criticism.

With a brief survey of what English literature has produced under this head, our present task will be concluded.

The term philosophy, as has been already explained, is here used in a very wide and loose sense, and applied to all works of thought and theory. We commence, however, with the consideration of philosophical works, strictly so called, in examining which we shall endeavour to observe some kind of natural and rational order.

Logic is usually regarded as the fore-court of philosophy, because it is the science which investigates the form of the reasoning principle, philosophy's indispensable instrument, and establishes the conditions of its effective use. The main achievements of English thinkers in this department are, Bacon's *Novum Organum*, Whately's *Elements of Logic*, Mill's *System of Logic*, and Sir William Hamilton's *Lectures*.

Lord Bacon — and in this Mr. Mill has followed him — treated Logic less as a formal science than as a means to an ulterior end, that end being the successful investigation of Nature. The rules which the logic of the schools had established for deductive reasoning, though indisputable, were, in Bacon's view, comparatively worthless, because they could not guide the mind in its search after physical laws. They were an instrument for testing the soundness of the knowledge which we had, or thought we

had already, not an instrument facilitating for us the acquisition of new knowledge. It was for this latter purpose that Bacon devised, in the *Novum Organum*, the rules of his new inductive logic. For what he demanded from the science was — not a solution of the problem, "given certain premisses, to deduce a logical conclusion," but an analysis of the conditions under which true premisses or propositions, relative to phenomena, might be formed. The human mind being once turned into the track of the investigation of nature, it was obvious that, to prevent waste of labour and rash generalisation, the formation of such a logic was indispensable. Mr. Mill in his *System of Logic*, and Sir John Herschel in his admirable *Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy*, have done much to complete the Baconian design.

Whately and Hamilton, on the other hand, have treated logic rather upon its own merits as a formal science, than as a mere instrument of enquiry. Archbishop Whately's *Elements of Logic* exhibit, with beautiful precision of statement and felicity of illustration, the Aristotelian logic in an English dress. Sir W. Hamilton, having in view the cultivation of mental rather than of physical science, subjected the preliminary processes of logic, such as generalisation and predication, to a new and very rigorous analysis, and has in many respects presented the technical parts of the science under a new light.

The logical weapon being brightened and made ready for action, the question next occurs, on what subject-matter it is to be employed. The school of physicists employ it at once in the investigation of nature; and the various hypotheses, theories, or laws of physical science, together with natural history and other accumulations of facts gained by observation and experiment, are the collective result. With such labours the student of literature has nothing to do. But for those who devote themselves to philosophy, in the ancient acceptation of the term, as to

that study which will lead them to wisdom, the next step, after perfecting the logical weapon, is psychology, or the study of the human mind. And as this study divides itself into two main branches, that of the moral affections and sentiments, and that of the intellectual faculties, we have a moral and an intellectual philosophy corresponding. The first branch has been cultivated among ourselves by Butler, Adam Smith, Paley, Hume, Hutcheson, and many others. Butler's admirable *Sermons*, preached at the Rolls chapel, are the most profound and important contributions to Moral Philosophy that our literature possesses. Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and Hume's *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, are also celebrated works. Of these, and of the writings of the other English moralists, the reader will find an account in Sir James Mackintosh's *Dissertation on Ethical Philosophy.*

Locke's famous *Essay on the Human Understanding*, which belongs to that branch of psychology which investigates the intellectual faculties, holds a distinguished place, not only in English but in universal literature. However, Locke examines many other besides purely psychological questions. The Scotch school of philosophers pushed this class of researches very far. Reid, Beattie, Dugald Stewart, and Brown carefully studied the intellect, and described its various powers. Reid, annoyed and scandalized at the scepticism of Hume, propounded the theory of instincts, and described a great number of intellectual judgements, which Locke and his followers had classed among acquired notions, as original and instinctive. He — but still more Beattie — carried this theory to the length of extravagance, and exposed himself to the ridicule of Priestley in his *Remarks on Dr. Reid's Inquiry.* Hartley's work *On Man* is to a large extent psychological. Lastly, Sir W. Hamilton's Lectures contain probably a more exhaustive analysis of the intellectual processes and powers than the work of any other English writer.

After distinguishing and describing the powers of the human mind, Philosophy in every past age has been accustomed to proceed to those further enquiries which are termed *metaphysical*, and to ask itself — whence did this complex being which I have just examined take its origin, and what is its destination? in what relations does this finite stand to infinite intelligence? can we know anything of the invisible and super-sensual world that surrounds us? Glorious and elevating speculations! which it has become the fashion of modern thinkers to decry as useless, but which for a certain class of minds — and those not of the meanest capacity — will possess to the end of time an invincible attraction. We can merely enumerate the most important among the works of English metaphysicians. Cudworth's *Intellectual System of the Universe* has for its general object to prove against Hobbes and the atheists the existence and the goodness of God. Henry More, the most eminent among the school known as the Platonizing divines of the seventeenth century, is the author of *The Mystery of Godliness*, *An Antidote against Atheism*, *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*, and other works, in which, with much that is noble and lofty, we remark too manifest a readiness to put faith, upon insufficient evidence, in any stories that tended to establish the presence of a mystical and supernatural element in human affairs. Parts of Locke's *Essay*, particularly the first book, which discusses the question whether any of our ideas are innate, and decides it in the negative, are metaphysical. Berkeley's *Hylas and Philonous*, and *Principles of Human Knowledge* are the treatises in which his ideal philosophy is expounded. As this philosophy has been much misunderstood, and Reid thought that he had said a clever thing when he had advised Berkeley to test its truth, and the reality of matter, by knocking his head against a post, it may serve a good purpose to extract the following

remarks from Lewes's *Biographical History of Philosophy*: —

"When Berkeley denied the existence of matter, he meant by 'matter' that unknown *substratum*, the existence of which Locke had declared to be a necessary *inference* from our knowledge of qualities, but the nature of which must ever be altogether hidden from us. Philosophers had assumed the existence of Substance, i. e. of a *noumenon* lying underneath all *phenomena* — a substratum supporting all qualities—a *something* in which all accidents *inhere*. This unknown substance Berkeley rejects. It is a mere abstraction, he says. If it is unknown, unknowable, it is a figment, and I will none of it; for it is a figment worse than useless; it is pernicious, as the basis of all atheism. If, by matter you understand *that* which is seen, felt, tasted, and touched, then I say matter exists; I am as firm a believer in its existence as any one can be, and *herein I agree with the vulgar*. If, on the contrary, you understand by matter that occult substratum which is *not* seen, *not* felt, *not* tasted, and not touched — that of which the senses do not, cannot, inform you — then I say I believe not in the existence of matter, and *herein I differ from the philosophers and agree with the vulgar*."

In support of this view, Berkeley's own words are presently quoted: —

"I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend either by sensation or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. The only thing whose existence I deny is that which philosophers call Matter, or corporeal substance. And in doing this there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will never miss it."

Hume, in his *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, begins with some valuable definitions, which may be considered to constitute an improvement, so far as they go, on the terminology of Locke, but ends with proposing "sceptical doubts," as applicable to every possible philoso-

phical proposition, which the mind can entertain. After Hume, the celebrated Kant in Germany took up the metaphysical debate, and produced his *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*,* a work which makes an epoch in philosophy. Among ourselves Hume was feebly answered, upon obvious common-sense grounds, by Reid and his followers; but they were rather pscyhologists than metaphysicians. Coleridge, whose genius pre-eminently fitted him to excel in metaphysics, has left, indeed, much that is of the highest value, but in a discontinuous sketchy condition, and with large *desiderata*. The *Aids to Reflection* is the work which contains more of his mind upon the deepest questions than any other. The *Friend*, and the *Literary Remains*, while they illustrate to a great extent his metaphysical tenets, belong in form rather to the department of Essays.

Political Science: Filmer, Hobbes, Milton, Burke.

Political science, as might have been expected in a country with such an eventful political history, owes much to English thinkers. The conservative and absolutist side has been ably and warmly argued, but on the whole the palm undoubtedly rests with the writers on the liberal and constitutional side. Sir Robert Filmer and the philosopher Hobbes, upon widely different grounds, wrote in support of arbitrary power. In his *Patriarcha*, published in 1680, but written long before, Filmer maintained, not only against Milton and Grotius, but also against St. Thomas and Bellarmine, that men were not born free, but slaves; and that monarchs reigned with a patriarchal, absolute, and unquestionable right, derived, like that of Adam over his own household, immediately from God. Hobbes was an absolutist on quite other grounds. He believed in no divine right of kings; but he had the

* Critique of Pure Reason.

lowest possible opinion of subjects, that is, of mankind in general, and thought that to place power in the hands of the masses was the sure way to bring in anarchy. He was therefore in favour of a strong central government, which he would not allow to be thwarted in its task of repression by the licensed meddling of the persons, whether acting directly or by representation, who were subjected to it. Hobbes' political system is unfolded in several of his works, particularly the *De Cive* (1642), the *De Corpore Politico* (1650), and the *Leviathan* (1651).

On the other side occur the names of Milton, Algernon Sydney, Harington, and Locke in the seventeenth century, and Burke, Godwin, and Payne, in the eighteenth; all of whom were in favour of liberal principles of government, however wide the gulf, in spirit and practical aims, which separated the republican Sydney from the constitutionalist Locke, or the author of the *Rights of Man* from the upholder of the sacredness of prescription. Milton's *Areopagitica*, or *Speech for the Liberty of unlicensed Printing*, though in form a mere pamphlet, is so full of weighty thoughts, which have since been adopted by the reason of civilised Europe, that we prefer to consider it as a contribution to political science. It is an argument for the freedom of the press, and is perhaps the most eloquent — certainly one of the least rugged — among the prose works of Milton. The following is one of the most important passages. After speaking of the glorious spectacle of a great nation "renewing her mighty youth," and producing in boundless profusion the richest fruits of awakened intelligence, he proceeds: —

"What should ye do then? Should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge, and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this city? Should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their

bushel? * Believe it, lords and commons! they who counsel ye to such a suppressing, do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves; and I will soon show how. If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own mild, and free, and humane government; it is the liberty, lords and commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased us; liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarified and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged, and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly pursuing of the truth, unless ye first make yourselves, that made us so, less the lovers, less the founders, of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formal, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the research and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own virtue propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that, unless ye reinforce an abrogated and merciless law, that fathers may dispatch at will their own children. . . . Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all other liberties."

Harington's *Oceana* has been already noticed.† Locke's two *Treatises on Government* were written as a reply to the *Patriarcha*, and embody the famous doctrine of an "original compact" between prince and people. An interesting summary of them may be found in Hallam's *Literature of Europe.* Among Burke's political writings, those which contain the clearest and fullest statement of his political philosophy are the *Reflections on the French Revolution*, and the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.* His principles were constitutional and progressive,

* The censors of books are compared to those who *engross* or forestall all the corn in the market, and thus create an artificial scarcity.

† See p. 151.

but anti-revolutionary. The *Appeal* &c. was occasioned by some slighting notice taken in Parliament of the *Reflections*, as the work of a renegade Whig. Burke endeavours to show that the new Whigs have changed their principles, and not he; that from constitutionalists they have become revolutionists. The following striking passage occurs near the end of the treatise: —

"Place, for instance, before your eyes such a man as Montesquieu. Think of a genius not born in every country, or every time; a man gifted by nature with a penetrating aquiline eye; with a judgement prepared with the most extensive erudition; with an herculean robustness of mind, and nerves not to be broken with labour; a man who could spend twenty years in one pursuit. Think of a man, like the universal patriarch in Milton (who had drawn up before him in prophetic vision the whole series of the generations which were to issue from his loins), a man capable of placing in review, after having brought together from the east, the west, the north, and the south, from the coarseness of the rudest barbarism to the most refined and subtle civilisation, all the schemes of government which had ever prevailed amongst mankind, weighing, measuring, collating, and comparing them all, joining fact with theory, and calling into council, upon all this infinite assemblage of things, all the speculations which have fatigued the understandings of profound reasoners in all times! — Let us then consider that all these were but so many preparatory steps to qualify a man — and such a man — tinctured with no national prejudice, with no domestic affection, to admire, and to hold out to the admiration of mankind, the constitution of England! And shall we Englishmen revoke to such a suit? Shall we, when so much more than he has produced remains still to be understood and admired, instead of keeping ourselves in the schools of real science, choose for our teachers men incapable of being taught; whose only claim to know is, that they have never doubted; from whom we can learn nothing but their own indocility; who would teach us to scorn what in the silence of our hearts we ought to adore?"

In the *Reflections*, which we have not space to examine

in detail, occurs the famous passage on Marie Antoinette and the "age of chivalry."

Essays.

An essay, as its name implies, is an endeavour, within definite limits of time and subject, to attain to truth. It is the elucidation by thought of some one single topic, of which the mind had previously possessed an indistinct notion. The essay-writer stands at the opposite pole of thought to the system-monger; the first is ever analysing and separating, the second grouping and generalising. This style of writing, speaking generally, was unknown to the middle ages; it arose in the sixteenth century. Nor is the explanation obscure, or far to seek. The general tendency of thought in the middle ages was to *totality*; to regard philosophy as one whole, truth as one, religion as one, nature as one. One of the typical books of the middle ages — the *Liber Sententiarum* — is a *complete* theology, *corpus* Theologiæ; it traverses the entire field. But the general tendency of thought in modern times has been to separation and subdivision; to break up wholes, to mistrust generalisations; — to examine the parts severally and attain to a perfect knowledge of each individual part, in the hope of ultimately combining the knowledge of particulars into a sound theory of the whole. The same tendency of mind which has in the last three centuries produced and rendered popular so many volumes of essays and detached cogitations in literature, has in the scientific world resulted in the innumerable monographs, reports, and papers, by which each enquirer into nature, in his own special department, contributes to the already enormous stock of particular knowledge.

Essays do not include political tracts or pamphlets, from which we may easily distinguish them by considering the difference in the ends proposed. The end of an essay

is knowledge; the end of a political tract or pamphlet, action. Logic appertains to the former, rhetoric to the latter. The essay writer has answered his purpose if he presents to us a new and clearer view of the subject which he handles, and leads us to think upon it. The political writer has answered his purpose if, whatever the view may be which he wishes to enforce, his arguments, whether they be sound or specious, tend to arouse his readers to action in the direction pointed out.

The heterogeneous character of the subjects of essays makes it useless, if not impossible, to classify them. An essay may be written about anything whatever which an attentive thinker can place in a new light, or form a plausible theory about; there would therefore be no end to the division and subdivision. We shall merely notice some of the most remarkable collections of essays in our literature. Bacon's essays, concerning which some particulars were noted at page 96, are the earliest in the series. As a specimen, we give a passage from the essay *Of Plantations*, which must have been one of the latest composed, for it is evident from it that the colony of Virginia (founded in 1605) had then been in existence for several years: —

"Plantations are amongst ancient, primitive, and heroical works. When the world was young, it begat more children; but now it is old, it begets fewer; for I may justly account new plantations to be the children of former kingdoms. I like a plantation in a pure soil; that is, where people are not *displanted*, to the end to plant in others. For else it is rather an extirpation than a plantation. Planting of countries is like planting of woods; for you must make account to lose almost twenty years' profit, and expect your recompense in the end. For the principal thing that hath been the destruction of most plantations, hath been the base and hasty drawing of profit in the first years. It is true, speedy profit is not to be neglected, as far as may stand with the good of the plantations, but no farther. It is a shame-

ful and unblessed thing, to take the scum of people, and wicked condemned men, to be the people with whom you plant. And not only so, but it spoileth the plantation, for they will ever live like rogues, and not fall to work, but be lazy, and do mischief, and spend victuals, and be quickly weary, and then certify over to their country, to the discredit of the plantation. . . . . Consider, likewise, what commodities the soil, where the plantation is, doth naturally yield, that they may some way help to defray the charge of the plantation; so it be not, as was said, to the untimely prejudice of the main business, as it hath fared with tobacco in Virginia. Wood commonly aboundeth but too much; and therefore timber is fit to be one. If there be iron ore, and streams whereupon to set the mills; iron is a brave commodity where wood aboundeth. . . . . For government, let it be in the hands of one, assisted with some counsel; and let them have commission to execute martial laws, with some limitation. And above all, let men make that profit of being in the wilderness, as they have God always, and His service, before their eyes. . . . . If you plant where savages are, do not only entertain them with trifles and gingles; but use them justly and graciously, with sufficient guard, nevertheless; and do not win their favour by helping them to invade their enemies, but for their defence it is not amiss. And send oft of them over to the country that plants, that they may see a better condition than their own, and commend it when they return."

Felltham's *Resolves*, Bishop Hall's *Centuries of Meditations and Vows*, and Browne's *Religio Medici*, have all the character of essays: Hume's *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary*, published in 1742 and 1752, show a remarkable union of practical shrewdness, with power of close and searching thought. In our own age, John Foster's *Essays in a Series of Letters to a Friend*, have obtained a high reputation. They are upon ethical subjects, written in a plain strong style, and profoundly reasoned. Lord Macaulay's *Essays*, most of which were originally contributed to the Edinburgh Review, would generally fall, according to the terminology that we have adopted, under

the head of Criticism; and the same remark applies to Jeffrey's *Essays*.

Criticism.

Criticism may be, 1. philosophical, 2. literary, 3. artistic. Of the first kind, Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* is a splendid instance. After having, in the first book, expatiated in that beautiful language, not more thoughtful than it is imaginative, which he could command at pleasure, upon the dignity and utility of learning, he proceeds in the second part to consider what are the principal works or acts of merit which tend to promote learning. These, he decides, are conversant with, 1. the places of learning; 2. the books or instruments of learning; 3. the persons of the learned. He then passes in review the chief defects observable in the existing arrangements for the promotion of learning. One of these is, that "there hath not been, or very rarely been, any public designation of writers or enquirers concerning such parts of knowledge as may appear not to have been already sufficiently laboured or undertaken; unto which point it is an inducement to enter into a view and examination what parts of learning have been prosecuted, and what omitted; for the opinion of plenty is among the causes of want, and the great quantity of books maketh a show rather of superfluity than lack; which surcharge nevertheless is not to be remedied by making no more books, but by making more good books, which, as the serpent of Moses, might devour the serpents of the enchanters." The object of the work, therefore, is to institute a critical survey of the entire field of learning, with a view, partly to guide public patronage, partly to stimulate voluntary endeavours to cultivate the waste places indicated. And this survey he proceeds to make, dividing all learning into three branches—history, philosophy, and poetry, and noting what has been done, what overlooked, in each.

2. In the department of literary criticism, some admirable works have to be named. The earliest and one of the best among these is Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* (mentioned at page 98), from which we must find room for an extract, describing the invigorating moral effects of poetry: —

"Now, therein, of all sciences (I speak still of human, and according to the human conceit) is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it: nay he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that full of that taste you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness, but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music; and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner; and, pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such other as have a pleasant taste: which, if one should begin to tell them the nature of the aloes or rhubarbarum they should receive, would sooner take their physic at their ears than at their mouth: so is it in men; (most of whom are childish in the best things till they be cradled in their graves;) glad they will be to hear the tales of Hercules, Achilles, Cyrus, Æneas: and hearing them, must needs hear the right description of wisdom, valour, and justice: which if they had been barely (that is to say, philosophically) set out, they would swear they be brought to school again. That imitation whereof poetry is, hath the most conveniency to nature of all other: in so much that, as Aristotle saith, those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made, in poetical imitation, delightful. Truly, I have known men, that even with reading Amadis de Gaul, which, God knoweth, wanteth much of a perfect poesie, have found their hearts moved to the exercise of courtesy,

liberality, and specially courage. Who readeth Æneas carrying old Anchises on his back, that wisheth not it were his fortune to perform so excellent an act? Whom do not those words of Turnus move (the tale of Turnus having planted his image in the imagination)—

> 'fugientem hæc terra videbit?
> Usque adeone mori miserum est?'"

Gascoyne, Puttenham, and Webbe, who all wrote critical treatises on poetry and metre, belong also to the sixteenth century. Dryden's famous *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, vindicating the use of rhyme in drama, appeared in 1667. The critical passages which occur in Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* appear to be in the main just and sound. Shakspearian criticism has given rise to an entire library of its own. Fielding led the way, by the admiring yet discerning notices of the great dramatist which he introduced in his *Tom Jones*. The prefaces and notes of Pope and Johnson followed; at a later date appeared Hazlitt's *Characters*, and the critical notices in Coleridge's *Literary Remains*.

But the greatest achievement of literary criticism that we can point to is Hallam's *Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries*. This is a book of which the sagacity and the calmness are well matched with the profound erudition. A certain coldness or dryness of tone is often noticeable, which seems not to be wondered at; for it is not easy to imagine that the man who spent so large a portion of his moral existence in surveying the labours and mastering the thoughts of men of the utmost diversity of aspiration and opinion, could have felt a very warm personal interest in any of their systems.

Among works on poetical criticism, we can scarcely err in assigning a high and permanent place to Mr. Thackeray's *Lectures on the English Humorists*.

3. In artistic criticism, the same remark might be hazarded as to Mr. Ruskin's *Modern Painters* and *Stones of Venice*. Nothing else of much importance can be named, except Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting* and Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Lectures*.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

ON ENGLISH METRES.

THERE exists no work of any authority, so far as I am aware, upon the metres used by our poets, except Mr. Guest's *History of English Rhythms*, which is too long and too intricate for general use. In the absence then of better guidance, the following description and classification of English metres may be of use to students.

Metre is the arrangement into verse of definite measures of sounds, definitely accented. Thus the hexameter is the arrangement in lines of six equivalent quantities of sound, called feet, each of which consists, or has the value, of two long syllables, and is accented on the first syllable. The heroic metre, when strictly regular, is the arrangement in rhymed couplets of five feet, each foot being equivalent to an iambus (a short and a long syllable), and accented on the *last* syllable. In practice, spondees and trochees are often introduced, the accent is often laid on the *first* syllable of a foot, and there are frequently not more than four, sometimes not more than three, accents in a line.

Rhyme is the regular recurrence in metre of similar sounds. There are four principal kinds; the perfect, the alliterative, the assonantal, and the consonantal. In the perfect rhyme, the rhyming syllables correspond throughout; in other words, they are identical. It is common in French poetry, but rare in English, e. g.: —

> Selon divers besoins, il est une *science*
> D'etendre les liens de notre con*science*.— MOLIÈRE.

The alliterative rhyme is the correspondence of the initial consonants of the rhyming syllables. This is the ordinary rhythm of the Anglo-Saxon, and also of the Scandinavian poetry, e. g.:—

Eádward kínge, éngla hlaford
Sénde sóthfœste sáwle to críste
On gódes wæra, gást háligne.*

These lines, which represent the most common of Anglo-Saxon rhythms, have each four accents, and either three or two rhyming syllables, which are always accented. When the rhyming syllables begin with vowels, these vowels are usually different, though not always.

The assonantal rhyme is the correspondence of the vowels merely in the rhyming syllables. It is of two kinds: in the first the vowel ends the syllable; in the second, it is followed by a consonant, or a consonant and vowel. The first kind occurs continually in English poetry; the second, never; but it is a favourite rhyme with the Spanish poets. Examples:—

(1) If she seem not such to m*e*,
What care I how good she b*e*?

(2) Ferid los, cavalleros, por amor de carid*ad*;
Yo soy Ruy Diaz el Cid, Campeador de Biba*r*.†—
Ballad of the Cid.

The consonantal rhyme is the ordinary rhyme of English poetry; it is the correspondence of the vowel and the *final* consonant or consonants in the rhyming syllables. Example:—

Golden boys and girls all m*ust*,
Like chimney sweepers, come to d*ust*.

All that has been said hitherto applies only to single rhymes, the masculine rhyme of the Italians. The double, or feminine rhyme, which is the ordinary rhyme of Italian poetry, is also

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* From Guest's *Rhythms*, ii. 70. His translation is,
King Edward, lord of the Engle,
Sent his righteous soul to Christ,
(In God's promise trusting) a spirit holy.

† "Smite them, knights, for the love of charity;
I am Ruy Diaz the Cid, champion of Bivar."

common with us. The first syllables form always a consonantal or assonantal (No. 1.) rhyme, the second syllables a perfect rhyme. Examples: —

Ecco da mille voci unita*men-te*,
Gerusalemme salutar si *sen-te*.— Tasso. *Geru. Liber.*
And join with thee calm Peace and *Qui-et*,
Spare Fast, that oft with Gods doth *di-et*.

In the triple rhyme, called *sdrucciola* by the Italians, the first syllables follow the same rule as in the double rhyme; the second and third must be, in English poetry at least, perfect rhymes. Example: —

Kings may be blest, but Tam was *glo-ri-ous*,
O'er all the ills of life vic*to-ri-ous*.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to enumerate the principal kinds of feet used in English poetry. A long syllable is represented by the mark (¯), a short syllable by the mark (˘).* The feet most used are,

The spondee (¯ ¯)
The iambus (˘ ¯)
The trochee (¯ ˘)
The dactyl (¯ ˘ ˘)
The anapæst (˘ ˘ ¯)
The amphiambus † (˘ ¯ ˘)

English metres may be divided into, 1. the unrhymed; 2. the rhymed. The first, in which a comparatively small por-

* In English poetry, length or quantity depends almost entirely upon accent. Accented syllables are long, unaccented short. In Greek and Latin poetry, as is well known, quantity is something intrinsic in each syllable, and depends upon the nature of the vowel and the consonant or consonants following it. Our ears, trained to mark the accents only, take little notice of this kind of quantity; yet those poets who utterly neglect it, are felt to write roughly and unmelodiously, though most of us could not explain distinctly the grounds of the feeling. A Roman ear could not have endured such a dactyl as *far in the*, because to it the *in* would be made irredeemably long by position. This we scarcely notice; but even an English ear would stumble at such a dactyl, as e. g., *far midst the*.

† Using the analogy of the Homeric δέπας ἀμφικύπελλον I have, for the sake of convenience, substituted this term for the more usual "amphibrachys," from which it is impossible to form an adjective.

tion of our poetry is written, may be quickly disposed of. They are of three kinds, hexameters, blank verse, and choral metres. The general rule governing the formation of English hexameters has been already given; it need only be added that the last or sixth foot must always be a spondee, and the fifth ordinarily a dactyl, though a spondee is also admissible. Example:—

Felt she in | myriad | springs her | sources | far in the | mountains |

Stirring, col|lecting, | heaving, up|rising, | forth out-|flowing. | —Clough.

Blank verse is a continuous metre, consisting, in its most perfect form, of lines containing five iambuses, each iambus being accented on the last syllable. In other words, it is a decasyllabic metre, having the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth syllables accented. We have not space to discuss here all the variations from this form, which are numerous; but the student will find the subject ably handled in Johnson's papers in the *Rambler* on Milton's versification. The following examples illustrate the principal variations, which affect, 1. the position of their accents; 2. their number; 3. the termination of the line:—

When down | along | by plea|sant Tem|pe's stream | (1)

Left for | repen|tance, none | for par|don left | (2)

In-fi-|nite wrath,| and in|fi-nite | despair |
How o-|vercome | this dire | ca-lam-|ity | (3)

To the | last syl-|lable of | recor-|ded time | (4)

Tomor-|row and | tomor|row and | tomor-|row (5)

Who can | be wise, | amazed, | temperate, | and fu-|ri-ous (6)

In (1), a strictly regular line, the accents are five in number, and occupy their normal positions. In (2) they are still five, but the first syllable is accented instead of the second. In each of the two examples of (3) there are but four accents, differently placed in each line. In (4) there are but three accents. In (5) there is one, and in (6) two redundant syllables.

In most English decasyllabic verse, whether blank or rhymed, the line with four accents predominates. It is often possible to find a dozen lines in succession so accented in Shakspeare and Milton. But in Pope's decasyllabics, as might be expected from so perfect a versifier, the line with five accents predominates.

The effect of the variation in the *position* of the accents is to prevent the monotony which would arise from the perpetual recurrence of iambuses. It answers the same purpose as the free intermixture of dactyls and spondees in the hexameter. The effect of the reduction in the *number* of accents is to quicken the movement of the line. This explains why lines of five accents are the exception, not the rule, in Shakspeare; for the dramatic movement, as representing dialogue, and the actual conflict of passions, is essentially more rapid than either the epic or didactic. With less justification Wordsworth in the *Excursion* frequently introduces lines of only three accents, such as,

> By the deformities of brutish vice.

Such lines can seldom be so managed as to make other than an unpleasing impression on the ear. The license of redundant syllables is allowed in dramatic, but not in epic verse. Milton does indeed use it, but sparingly. In eighty lines taken at random from the *Paradise Lost* I have found four instances of redundancy; in the same number of lines similarly taken from the play of *King John*, eighteen instances.

Choral metres may be designated according to the kind of foot which predominates in them. Those used in Southey's *Thalaba* are dactylic or iambic: —

> In the Dom|daniel | caverns,
> Under the | roots of the | ocean;

and,

> Sail on, | sail on, | quoth Tha-|laba,
> Sail on, | in Al-|lah's name. |

In *Queen Mab* they are iambic, and in the *Strayed Reveller*, trochaic: —

> Faster, | faster, |
> O | Circe, | Goddess. |

Rhymed Metres.

Every English rhymed metre is in one of three measures, the iambic, the trochaic, the triple.

Again, all rhymed metres are either continuous or in stanzas.

Continuous Verse.

I. The following is a list of continuous rhyming metres, in iambic measure: —

1. Quadrisyllabics; e. g.:—

The steel | we touch |
Forced ne'er | so much, |
Yet still | removes |
To that | it loves. | —Drayton (in *Guest*).

2. Octosyllabics, having, in strictness, four accents; e. g.:—

Woe worth | the chase! | woe worth | the day! |
That cost | thy life, | my gal-|lant grey! |

This metre is extremely common; most of the old romances are in it, as well as Scott's and Byron's romantic poems, (except *Lara* and the *Corsair*), *Hudibras*, *Lalla Rookh*, &c.

3. Decasyllabics, having, in strictness, five accents. If rhyming in couplets, they form the famous heroic metre:—

Awake! | my St. | John, leave | all mea-|ner things |
To low | ambi-|tion, and | the pride | of kings. |

It is needless to remark that an enormous quantity of verse has been composed in this metre. Sometimes the rhymes occur irregularly, as in *Lycidas*:—

Fame is | the spur | that the | clear spirit | doth raise, |
(That last | infir-|mity | of no|ble minds) |
To scorn | delights | and live | labo-|rious days, | &c.

Endecasyllabics, which constitute the heroic metre of the Italians, fall, in our metrical system, under the description of redundant lines. As exceptions to the decasyllabic rule, they occur very frequently; but still only serve to prove that rule, like other exceptions.

4. The Alexandrine, or twelve-syllable metre, having in strictness six accents. This is the metre used by some of our old rhyming chroniclers, and by Drayton in his *Poly-olbion*; it is also the heroic metre of France; but with us it has fallen into disuse for three centuries. Example:—

The black | and dark|some nights, | the bright | and glad|some days
Indiff|erent are | to him, | his hope | on God | that stays.
Drayton (in *Guest*).

5. The fourteen-syllable metre, with seven accents. This measure occurs in some old metrical legends, and was used by

Chapman in his translation of Homer; but it is lumbering and unwieldy, and as such had long been laid aside by our poets, until revived by Mr. F. Newman, who stripped it of rhyme, and enriched it with a redundant syllable: —

O gen|tle friend! | if thou | and I | from this | encoun|ter sca|ping,
Hereaf|ter might | for e|ver be | from eld | and death | exemp|ted.

The following is from Chapman: —

To all | which Jove's | will gave | effect; | from whom | strife first | begunne |
Betwixt | Atri|des, king | of men, | and The|tis' god|like sonne. |

Combinations of some of these five metres have been occasionally employed, but with indifferent success. Thus Surrey joined the fourteen-syllable metre to the Alexandrine: —

When so|mer took | in hand | the win|ter to | assaile, |
With force | of might | and ver|tue great | his stor|my blasts | to quail. |

II. *Trochaics.* In continuous verse, two trochaic measures are in use; the fifteen syllable and the seven syllable. In the latter, eight-syllable lines, containing four full trochees, are of common occurrence; but the characteristic line of the measure is of seven syllables, and contains three trochees and a long syllable.

1. The fifteen-syllable trochaic line is in fact a combination of the eight syllable and the seven syllable. It is not common; the best example of it is *Locksley Hall*: —

Fool! a|gain the | dream, the | fancy ‖ but I | know my | words were | wild. |
But I | count the | grey bar|barian ‖ lower | than the | Christian | child.

2. The seven-syllable measure, both in continuous verse, and, as we shall presently see, in stanzas, was a great favourite with Keats and Shelley. In it the latter composed his *Lines written in the Euganean Hills*, and Keats his *Ode on the Poets*, and *The Mermaid Tavern*. Shakspeare also used it, as in the lines beginning

On a | day, a|lack the | day! |

The intermixture of eight-syllable lines, is exemplified in the following quotation: —

Thus ye | live on | high, and | then |
On the | earth ye | live a|gain; |
And the | souls ye | left be|hind you, |
Teach us, | here, the | way to | find you. |

Other mixed measures occasionally occur, as in Shakspeare's "*Crabbed Age and Youth*," &c.; which contains fives, sixes, and sevens.

III. In *Triple measures*, there is but one accent for every three syllables; while in the iambic and trochaic, there is one for every two. There is a close analogy between poetry in these measures, and music in triple time; a dancing lightness and gliding rapidity are characteristic of both. They are of three kinds, according to the foot which predominates in them — dactylic, anapæstic, and amphiambic. I can recollect no instances of the use of a triple measure in continuous verse, except Campbell's *Lochiel* and Walsh's *Despairing Lover*. The former is in amphiambic endecasyllabic rhyming couplets, each line containing three amphiambuses, and an iambus,

⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ –
Lochiel, | Lochiel, | beware of | the day,
When | the Lowlands | shall meet thee | in battle | array; |

the latter in amphiambic fives and sixes; each line containing either an amphiambus and an iambus, or two amphiambuses; e. g.: —

Tho' | his suit was | rejected, |
He sadly | reflected
That | a lover | forsaken |
A new love | may get |
⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ –
But | a neck that's | once broken |
⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ –
Can never | be set. |

In these examples, the words "when," "tho'," "that," and "but," are redundant syllables.

Stanzas.

The varieties of the stanza or stave are almost countless; some of the most common forms only can be noticed here. I again adopt the division into iambic, trochaic, and triple measures.

I. 1. The decasyllabic quatrain, or four-line stave, with alternating rhymes. Davenant's *Gondibert*, Dryden's *Elegy on Cromwell* and *Annus Mirabilis*, Gray's *Elegy*, and many other

considerable poems, are in this metre. A specimen of it may be found at p. 125.

2. The six-line stave is rare; it is used by Southwell in his pretty poems, *Time goes by Turns*, and *Scorn not the least*. It is the preceding four-line stave, with the addition of a rhyming couplet at the end.

3. The Chaucerian heptastich, or seven-line decasyllabic stave. It has three rhymes; one connecting the first and third lines; another the second, fourth, and fifth — and the third, the sixth, and seventh lines. For an example, see p. 276. Up to the reign of Elizabeth, no measure was a greater favourite with our poets than this.

4. The *ottava rima*, or eight-line decasyllabic stave. This is the heroic metre of the Italians, in which Tasso and Ariosto wrote. With us it has been seldom used; the chief example is *Don Juan*. It has three rhymes, thus arranged: —1, 3, 5; —2, 4, 6; —7, 8.

5. The Spenserian stanza, or nine-line decasyllabic stave, closed by an Alexandrine. It also has three rhymes, thus arranged: — 1, 3; — 2, 4, 5, 7; — 6, 8, 9. For examples, see pages 281—3.

6. The sonnet, or fourteen-line decasyllabic stave, of which there are several varieties. The sonnets of Shakspeare scarcely deserve the name in a metrical sense; their construction being so inartificial. They have no fewer than seven rhymes, and consist merely of three quatrains, with alternating rhymes, followed by a rhyming couplet. All our other poets, so far as I know, follow, in writing sonnets, the Petrarcan model, with some unimportant deviations. The sonnet of Petrarch is composed of two quatrains, with extreme and mean rhymes,* two in number; followed by six lines, of which the rhymes are arranged in several different ways. The most ordinary case is that in which the six lines have but two rhymes, and are arranged in three rhyming couplets. Milton's sonnet *On his deceased Wife* is an example of this kind. If the six lines have three rhymes, they usually follow each other in order, as shown in the following passage, taken from Milton's sonnet *to Cyriack Skinner*: —

* That is, rhymes connecting the first with the fourth, and the second with the third, lines.

To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Towards solid good what leads the nearest way;
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

Other varieties of arrangement may be found in the sonnets of Drummond, Milton, and Wordsworth; but they only affect the six concluding lines. The two opening quatrains, with their two rhymes, and the peculiar arrangement of these rhymes, are a fixed element in the sonnet. It has generally, at least in Italian poetry, four, and must never have more than five rhymes.

It would be tedious to enumerate all the different kinds of staves formed out of octosyllabics, and the combination of these with shorter lines. Three of these staves, the octosyllabic quatrain, the quatrain in eights and sixes, and the quatrain in sixes, with the third line octosyllabic, are commonly called, Long measure, Common measure, and Short measure. The six-line stave, in eights and sixes, was a favourite measure with the old romance writers. I call it the "Sir Thopas metre," because Chaucer uses it for his "Rime of Sir Thopas," in the Canterbury Tales. A rough specimen of it may be seen at page 70. The eight-line stave, formed of two quatrains in eights, or in eights and sixes, with alternating rhymes, is also common. But enough has now been said to enable the student to recognise and describe for himself any iambic measure that he may meet with.

II. Trochaic staves, though much used by our poets, do not present the same well-marked forms as the iambic staves. The predominant line is of seven syllables, that is, contains three trochees and a long syllable. However, octosyllabic lines of four trochees are of constant occurrence in heptasyllabic staves. The six-line stave in sevens, exemplified by the lines at page 328, by Jonson's *Hymn to Diana*, (1.) and many other pieces, and the eight-line stave in eights and sevens, exemplified by Glover's *Hosier's Ghost*, (2.) are perhaps the most important among pure trochaic staves.

(1.) Queen and | huntress, | chaste and | fair, &c.

(2.) As near | Porto | bello | lying |
On the | gently | swelling | flood. |

A very beautiful metre sometimes results from the combination of a trochaic with an iambic measure. Thus in Shelley's *Skylark*, (see p. 337), a trochaic quatrain in sixes and fives is followed by an Alexandrine, the length and weight of which serves beautifully to balance and tone down the light joyousness of the trochaics. Shelley has given us another beautiful combination, that of trochees with dactyls. Example: —

When the | lamp is | shattered,
The | light in the | dust lies | dead, &c.

III. In triple measures, three important staves may be distinguished, the quatrain, the six-line stave, and the eight-line stave. Each of these three again may be either dactylic, anapæstic, or amphiambic, but the last is infinitely the most common variety of the three.

1. *Quatrains.* — The dactylic quatrain, each line of which contains three dactyls, followed either by a long syllable or a trochee, is not very common. There is an example in one of Byron's *Hebrew Melodies*; the "Song of Saul before his last battle:" —

Farewell to | others, but | never we | part |
Heir to my | royalty, | son of my | heart;

and again,

Brightest and | best of the | sons of the | morning. —Heber.

The anapæstic quatrain is distinguishable from the dactylic by the fact of its commencing with an anapæst. In triple measures, the foot with which a poem opens is nearly always a key to its metre. In the following example spondees are mixed with the anapæsts: —

Not a drum | was heard, | not a fu|neral note. | —Wolfe.

A purer specimen may be found in one of the Hebrew melodies, in which the line contains three anapæsts: —

And the voice | of my mourn|ing is o'er, |
And the moun|tains behold | me no more. |

The amphiambic quatrain, in which each line has either four amphiambuses, or three with an iambus, is the metre of a great

number of ballads and songs. The rhymes are sometimes coupled, sometimes alternate. Examples: —

I saw from | the beach, when | the morning | was shining, |
A bark o'er | the waters | move glorious|ly on. | —MOORE.

Count Albert | has armed him | the Paynim | among, |
Though | his heart it | was false, yet | his arm it | was strong.
SCOTT.

2. The six-line stave, triple measure, is only used, so far as I know, in amphiambic endecasyllabics. Scott's *Lochinvar* is an instance.

3. The eight-line stave in the amphiambic tetrameter, or tetrameter catalectic,* is a noble measure. Examples: —

Then blame not | the bard if | in pleasure's | soft dream, | &c.—MOORE.
I climbed the | dark brow of | the mighty | Helvellyn. | —SCOTT.

There are also eight-line staves in fives, and in fives and sixes. These are dactylic. Examples: —

Over the | mountains,
And | over the | waves, |
Under the | fountains,
And | under the | graves, &c.
Where shall the | traitor rest, |
He the de|ceiver, | &c.—SCOTT.

A dactylic stave in sixes, fives, and fours, varying in the number of lines, was used by Hood with great effect in his *Bridge of Sighs*.

One more Unfortunate |
Weary of | breath |
Rashly im|portunate |
Gone to her | death. |

There are many other varieties, but the rules already given will probably enable the student to name and classify them as he falls in with them.

* A line which falls short by one syllable of the full measure of four amphiambuses, is so designated.

Pindaric Measures.

These hold an intermediate position between stanzas and continuous verse. They are divided into strophes, which seldom contain more than twenty-eight or fewer than fourteen lines. Irregularity may be said to be their law; the lines, as well as the strophes, are of different lengths, and the rhymes are arranged in half-a-dozen different ways. For an example, see p. 327. As a general rule they are in iambic measure; but trochaic lines are sometimes introduced with striking effect. Thus in Gray's *Bard*, which consists of nine strophes, six containing fourteen, and three twenty lines, each shorter strophe opens with a trochaic line, so as to produce the sense of *abruptness* which the poet was aiming at: —

Ruin | seize thee, | ruthless | king, |
Confu|sion on | thy ban|ners wait. |

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Abbreviations: — Bp. for Bishop; Abp. for Archbishop flor. for floruit (flourished); *n.* for note. When only one date is given, it is that of *death*.

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